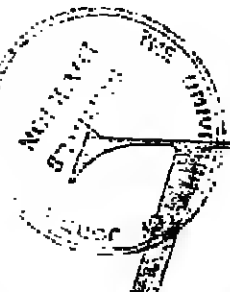


Thursday April 23 1998

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INTERNATIONAL

The Guardian

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Why everyone hates married lovey-doveys

Oh no! It's those smug couples

G2 with European weather



World Book Day

A true homage to Catalonia

G2 pages 8-9



OnLine

How to make a fast buck on the Net

G2 pages 12-13

Super bug threat to health

Paul Brown and Sarah Bosseley

MISUSE of antibiotics in intensive farming and over-prescribing by doctors are major threats to public health and could undo the 20th century miracle of taming killer diseases like TB and meningitis, the Government is being warned today.

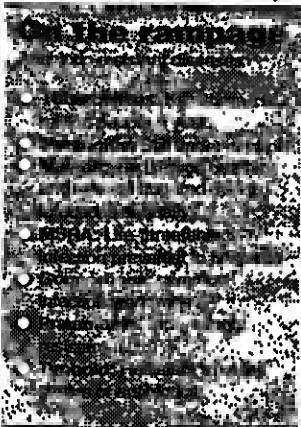
The House of Lords science and technology committee says in a report highly critical of doctors, hospitals and vets: "There is a dire prospect of returning to the pre-antibiotic era."

The report says that there are already bacteria dubbed "super bugs" in British hospitals which are resistant to antibiotics used as last resort treatments for patients. These bugs, known as MRSA, have become resistant because similar antibiotics have been used for 20 years on farms to promote the growth of intensively reared chickens, turkeys, pigs, sheep and cows.

The bugs are now "one step away from untreatable". Research shows that bacteria in animals dosed with antibiotics develop resistance. These bacteria are released into the environment and infect the farming community — and from there into the rest of the population.

In a mirror of the BSE crisis, the committee was told that repeated warnings of the dangers had been ignored in the interests of farmers and drug companies.

There were also serious problems in the NHS, where doctors routinely over-prescribed antibiotics to patients by 20 to 50 per cent. The report recommends a major re-education of doctors who are too willing to prescribe and a campaign to enlighten young mothers who put pressure on their GPs to hand out unnecessary drugs.



But it recognises nothing must be said or done to deter the patient from seeking help or the doctor from giving it.

Lord Soulsby, chairman of the committee, said: "Our inquiry has been an alarming experience. Misuse and over-use of antibiotics are now threatening to undermine all their early promises and success in curing disease."

"But the greatest threat is complacency, from ministers, the medical professions, the veterinary service, the farming community, and the public at large. Action must start now if we are not to return to the bad old days of incurable diseases before antibiotics were available."

Brian Duerden, deputy director of the Public Health Laboratory Service, said the report "emphasises what people involved in the management of infections have been saying for some time, that there is a serious threat to our ability in the future to treat infections. The resistance to antibiotics is growing and spreading and we need to conserve these very valuable drugs."

No new class of antibiotics had been developed for the last 20 years and prospects for the future did not look good. "Even if something were discovered today it could take 10 years to come on to the market," he said.

The World Health Organisation is warning of the dangers of a global plague of tuberculosis. Drug-resistant strains are likely to be carried round the globe by airline passengers, who will infect others through coughs and sneezes. Cases of antibiotic-resistant malaria, meningitis, gonorrhoea, typhoid and pneumonia are also a serious problem.

One of the witnesses to the committee, Richard Young of the Soil Association, said: "The Government should take this situation seriously and start to phase out the use of antibiotics for the short term profits of the farming industry. The indiscriminate use of antibiotics in farming is the root cause of the resistance of bacteria."

"We are on the brink of being unable to treat a range of life-threatening diseases. Unless we introduce stringent new controls we could suddenly find ourselves with a public health crisis of major proportions."

The National Farmers Union was criticised for refusing to give evidence but Brian Jennings, chairman of the health and welfare committee of the NFU, said he was unaware that the union had been invited.

"Antibiotics are a very useful tool for farmers and we want to continue to use them but are in favour of strict controls." He said he had yet to see any convincing evidence that there were human health implications in farmers using antibiotics as growth enhancers.

The report contains 22 recommendations and urges the Government to develop a strong and coherent strategy for the restrained use of antibiotics. Lord Soulsby emphasised that the problem was global and said the Government should lobby other EU states to stop antibiotics being sold over the counter.

Medicine's over-performed miracle, page 4

Just another day at the office. But out there 40 million people are trying to talk to you. . .



Telephone operators in Paris answering the flood of calls requesting World Cup tickets yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: JACK GUEZ

John Duncan Sports Correspondent

IT BECAME the hottest hotline of all time. World Cup telephone ticket chaos meant that only a handful of the estimated 40 million Europeans who called the number got through, leading to bitter frustration and a sore redial finger for everyone else.

But by the end of the day only 15,000 of the available 110,000 match tickets had been sold. The hotlines will be manned from 7am to 7pm daily until all tickets have gone, ensuring days of clogged lines and frayed tempers ahead.

The hotline kicked off at 7am yesterday, but was engaged an hour before that. It attracted 250,000 calls in the first five minutes of business, according to British Telecom, whose advance precautions ensured that the rest of the British telephone network worked normally.

In the first hour BT recorded 4 million calls to the hotline, the number settling down to around 2 million an hour after that.

The final figure for British calls is expected to beat the 30 million record held by British Airways for its Concorde promotion last year.

Beneath the scramble for tickets are continuing complaints at the way the tickets have been distributed by the World Cup organisers. French callers had their own, less busy, number with 30 operators, which means that 60 per cent of the extra 110,000 tickets are expected to have been snapped up by French citizens, even though they already had exclusive access to 60 per cent of World Cup seats when they first went on sale last year.

"They have done the absolute minimum to make tickets available to people outside France," said Alison Pilling of the Football Supporters Association. "They gave people false hope of getting tickets. In the end they have treated

Queen embroiled in scandal after Abbey organist is sacked



Martin Neary... appeal to Queen over accusations

Madeline Bunting Religious Affairs Editor

THE organist of Westminster Abbey, who was honoured by Buckingham Palace for his role in the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, is regarded as one of the country's finest church musicians, has been sacked for gross misconduct.

The Queen is now set to become embroiled in the bitter claret scandal in her role as Visitor — the ultimate authority — to the abbey. Martin Neary and his wife, Penny, a secretary, were dismissed yesterday by the Dean, the Very Reverend

Wesley Carr, and the Chapter who accused them of betraying trust and benefiting personally from their management of the abbey's choir.

The Nearys, who have worked and lived at the abbey since 1988, had their salaries stopped yesterday, and will have to leave their home in the cloisters which comes with the post of organist. Mrs Neary is said to be close to nervous breakdown.

Dr Carr concluded after a disciplinary inquiry: "Dr and Mrs Neary took advantage of his position on abbey events to further their own financial gain although it was possible the process would deprive others (in the choir) of income."

"Dr Neary behaved in such a way that it is now impossible for the Dean and Chapter any longer to invest trust in him."

The Nearys issued a statement through their solicitors yesterday in which they "categorically refute the allegations made against them". They said they were planning to appeal to the Queen, and that they deplored the manner in which the disciplinary procedures had been conducted.

The Nearys are accused of setting up a private company, Neary Music Ltd, to run tours, concerts and recordings for the abbey choir in April 1997 without the know-

edge or permission of the Dean and Chapter. It is claimed that the company paid Mrs Neary a "dividend" of £1,500 and that Dr Neary signed a recording contract with Sony in his capacity as company secretary without any reference to the Dean and Chapter.

The suspension of Dr Neary, aged 53, and his wife in March horrified many devotees — and well connected admirers of his work. Frank Field, Minister for Welfare Reform, accused Dr Carr of being a bully and of trying Dr Neary before a "kangaroo court".

Cherie Booth QC has taken on Dr Neary's appeal which will be heard on the Queen's behalf by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg. The abbey is a "Royal Peculiar", which means it is under the personal authority of the Crown.

Before the Nearys' dismissal, several prominent figures attempted to intervene to settle what the Nearys claim is simply a misunderstanding by the Dean who has been in post only a year. Lord Weir, the High Bailiff of the Abbey, John Gummer MP and the Dean of Guildford all offered to arbitrate.

Tevor Ford, a spokesman for the Nearys, said the company was "purely an administrative vehicle" following an earlier arrangement set up in

1994 with abbey staff and an auditor who have since left. He added that the Nearys had saved the abbey more than £20,000 and generated revenue for the abbey through facility fees for recording.

There has been intensive negotiations in recent days to persuade the Nearys to resign; they were even offered a sum of money to do so with a "face-saving press statement" to avoid further damaging publicity.

Dr Carr, who has a reputation of being ruthlessly efficient and abrasive in his dealings with colleagues and staff, insisted he had wanted to spare the Nearys humiliation.



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Sketch

Return of the great peacemaker



Simon Hoggart

THE Peacemaker flew into the Chamber, a calm smile on his face, an olive branch in his beak, and settled on a twig. Or at least a green bench.

Heavens, if only those murderous tribes in Northern Ireland and the Middle East were as warm and cuddly as British MPs. The Prime Minister must have felt like Akela returning to the cub pack. He and his backbenchers took turns to lick each other's furry pelts.

Linda Perham (Lab, Mfod N) was thrilled to have him home. "May I welcome the efforts you have made in the cause of peace in Northern Ireland and the Middle East?"

She trilled about the hopes that had been raised by the May 4 summit in London, "which brings a real prospect of stability and security for Israel and her neighbours".

Just in case we had missed it, she said it again. Tony Blair said gravely that progress could be made "if there is goodwill on both sides". (And pigs could fly if they all owned Gulfstream jets.)

Next William Hague was on his feet, welcoming the opportunity to welcome the agreement in Northern Ireland, and welcoming also the opportunity to pay tribute to the Prime Minister's courage in the search for peace.

Mr Blair's reply — and I paraphrase — was "yes". Ernie Ross, another Labour MP, said that Mr Blair had given the two sides an arena in London which would "help move matters forward to a real resolution".

How gratifying it must be for Mr Blair to hear such

heartfelt tributes! And how little it must trouble him that most are written out before-hand by the Whips and given to Labour MPs to memorise.

Paddy Ashdown tried to spoil the kissy-feely mood with a cantankerous question about education spending ("your figures require a degree of economic manipulation which would make Arthur Daly blush") but he failed, because Ben Bradshaw, the Labour victor of

the 1997 election, was soon on his feet declaring how delighted his constituents were with all that extra education spending. Thanks, Ben!

A few more troublemakers ignored the new national mood of reconciliation, demanding specific answers about the Ulster agreement. Alan Clark wanted to know whether the mass release of terrorists would also apply to British soldiers presently banged up for shooting people "while believing they were defending their comrades in arms".

Mr Blair blathered in a concerned kind of way. It was evidently not enough for Mr Clark who growled angrily at him for at least four minutes, then buried his face in his hands.

Robert McCartney, the independent unionist, wanted assurances that, when it came to decommissioning weapons, Sinn Féin would not be allowed to pretend it had nothing to do with the IRA.

Mr Blair replied with a majestic Blairism. (Unlike Majorisms, these make perfect sense. They are just so incredibly general and incredibly vague they could apply to anything at all.)

Speaking about the agreement as a whole, he said: "I believe it is a right, proper and fair way forward for the future, and it is the future we should be addressing."

What I like about that formula is that it could apply to peace agreements in strife-racked areas, or equally well to the provision of half-price beer mats for old age pensioners.

Reprocessing of weapons-grade material 'will promote international security' but greens are furious

Blair defends uranium deal

Lucy Ward
Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR yesterday defended the Government's decision to accept weapons-grade uranium and spent nuclear fuel from the former Soviet Union for reprocessing in Scotland, claiming the deal would help promote international security.

Amid furious protests from environmentalists, ministers denied Scotland was being used as a dumping ground for the waste which could arrive at the Dounreay nuclear plant from Georgia within days.

Downing Street also sought to counter claims that the arrangement, brokered between British and American officials and cleared by Mr Blair, represented a secret nuclear deal. A Commons statement on the issue had been prepared for release the moment the uranium arrived in Scotland, officials said, insisting that security concerns had prevented advance disclosure.

The assurances did nothing to reassure green campaigners, who fear the plan reflects moves by the British nuclear industry to secure its own future by establishing Britain as an international centre of fuel reprocessing.

Friends of the Earth, which condemns the UK's less restrictive policy on accepting spent fuel than the United States or France, called on the Government to deny the industry permission to reprocess nuclear waste.

The Government was first forced to acknowledge the shipment operation, code-named Auburn Endeavour, on Tuesday after details were leaked to the New York

Georgian 'hot' metal could be broken for routine use in hospitals

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

MOST of the 5kg consignment of highly enriched uranium from Georgia has never been used. It was being kept to fuel a reactor in a university to provide power for the campus and for scientific experiments.

It is in the form of a metal, and is contaminated by other dangerous elements. The Government says it can be broken into smaller pieces and theoretically re-used for medical and industrial purposes. Radioactivity is routinely used in hospitals in tiny quantities to bombard and kill cancer cells.

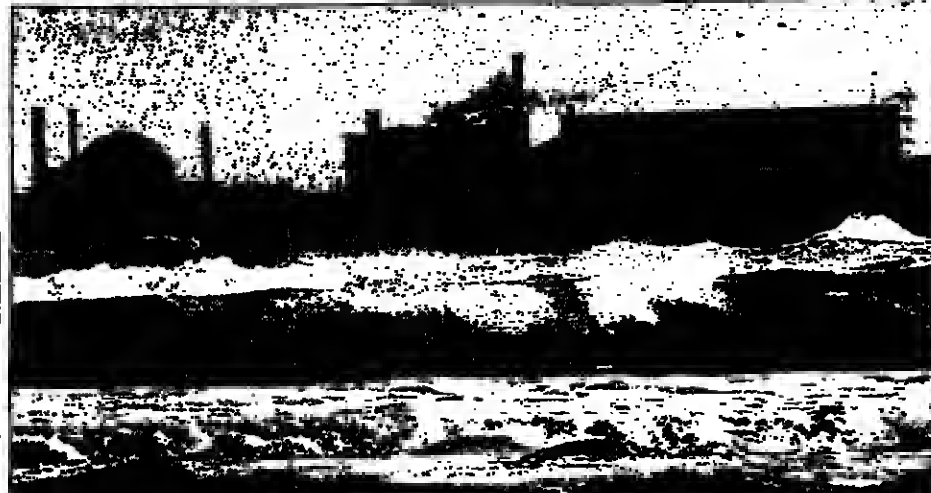
The remaining uranium, which weighs about 0.8kg, is contained in five fuel rods used in the Georgian reactor.

They have been producing heat in a nuclear reaction and as a result are contaminated with other radio-nuclides. The Government says these fuel rods will be reprocessed. But experts say they may eventually have to be stored because the Dounreay facilities are currently shut for safety reasons.

The problem for the UK Atomic Energy Authority is that the heat-producing fuel is very volatile. It is contained in a metal cladding whose condition is not yet known. A difficult decision will have to be made whether it is safe to store or must be reprocessed.

Currently the UKAEA is having to "make out a safety case" to the Government's watchdog, the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, for re-opening reprocessing lines.

Until "special dispensation" had been given for the Georgian consignment, all movement of radioactive materials to the site had been banned by the NII.



The Dounreay plant where the Georgian material is being sent PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MacLEOD

Re-processing involves dissolving the entire fuel rod and its contents in hot nitric acid to produce a liquid which can be put through a series of complex chemical processes. The end result is the recovery of the uranium in powder form and a quantity of liquid radioactive waste which has to be stored. It can be eventually turned into glass blocks as vitrified waste and stored until it stops producing heat.

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correspondence between members of a cabinet committee, but was never discussed at full Cabinet.

Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar rejected suggestions of a nuclear agreement, saying the Department of Trade and Industry, the Foreign Office and Scottish Office had been "completely involved".

Mr Dewar stressed the Government's responsibility to play its part in the international community. In the wrong hands, the material could be used to produce a small bomb, he warned.

During question time in the Commons, Mr Blair stressed the role the US and European nations were playing in dealing with the problem of nuclear waste in the former Soviet Union. Countries had decided to reprocess fuel to stop it falling into the hands of terrorists and guerrilla fighters.

The US has taken some 350kg of highly enriched uranium from Kazakhstan and Russia has taken about 137kg from Iraq since the Gulf war.

Britain had followed the normal rules for transportation of civil nuclear fuel in keeping the shipment a secret until after the transportation, he added.

Scottish National Party leader Alex Salmond said: "We've now got a Government who think beef on the bone is too unsafe for people in Scotland to eat but that Dounreay, a plant which is totally decrepit, which hasn't reprocessed anything for the last 18 months because it's literally falling apart, is a convenient dumping ground for nuclear waste."

The issue was resolved by

Bomb-grade cowardice, page 9
Leader comment, page 9

Review

Free fantasy rings hollow

Andrew Clements

Die Götterdämmerung
Barbican

BY THE end of Götterdämmerung, the final music drama in Wagner's Ring cycle, only one of the protagonists has survived. Siegfried has been murdered and Brünnhilde has thrown herself into the conflagration that has consumed Valhalla, together with all its gods including Wotan.

Only the dwarf Alberich, whose crime of stealing the Rhinegold began the whole tangled tragedy three evenings earlier, remains, but his subsequent fate lies outside the scope of Wagner's great scheme.

What might have happened to Alberich is the subject-matter of the American Christopher Rouse's new percussion concerto, which Evelyn Glennie, for whom it was commissioned, brought to London for the first time last night.

Die Götterdämmerung (Alberich Saved), says Rouse, "seeks to present a series of imagined moods, with the aid of various leitmotifs from the Ring associated with Alberich, which underline his possible state of mind and the conclusion of Götterdämmerung."

The 25-minute single movement begins with the Brünnhilde theme from the closing moments of the Ring, and ends with the deep pedal E flat with which the cycle opens, as if to suggest that Alberich has reversed time, disrupted the workings of the plot and restored the world to its innocent, pre-catastrophic state.

Those are the only moments of real allusive power in the entire work, for though Rouse freely plunders Wagner's scores — all the major themes associated with Alberich are brought into play at some point or other, and the newly invented material plays a subsidiary role — he does not offer any kind of ironic critique on the drama.

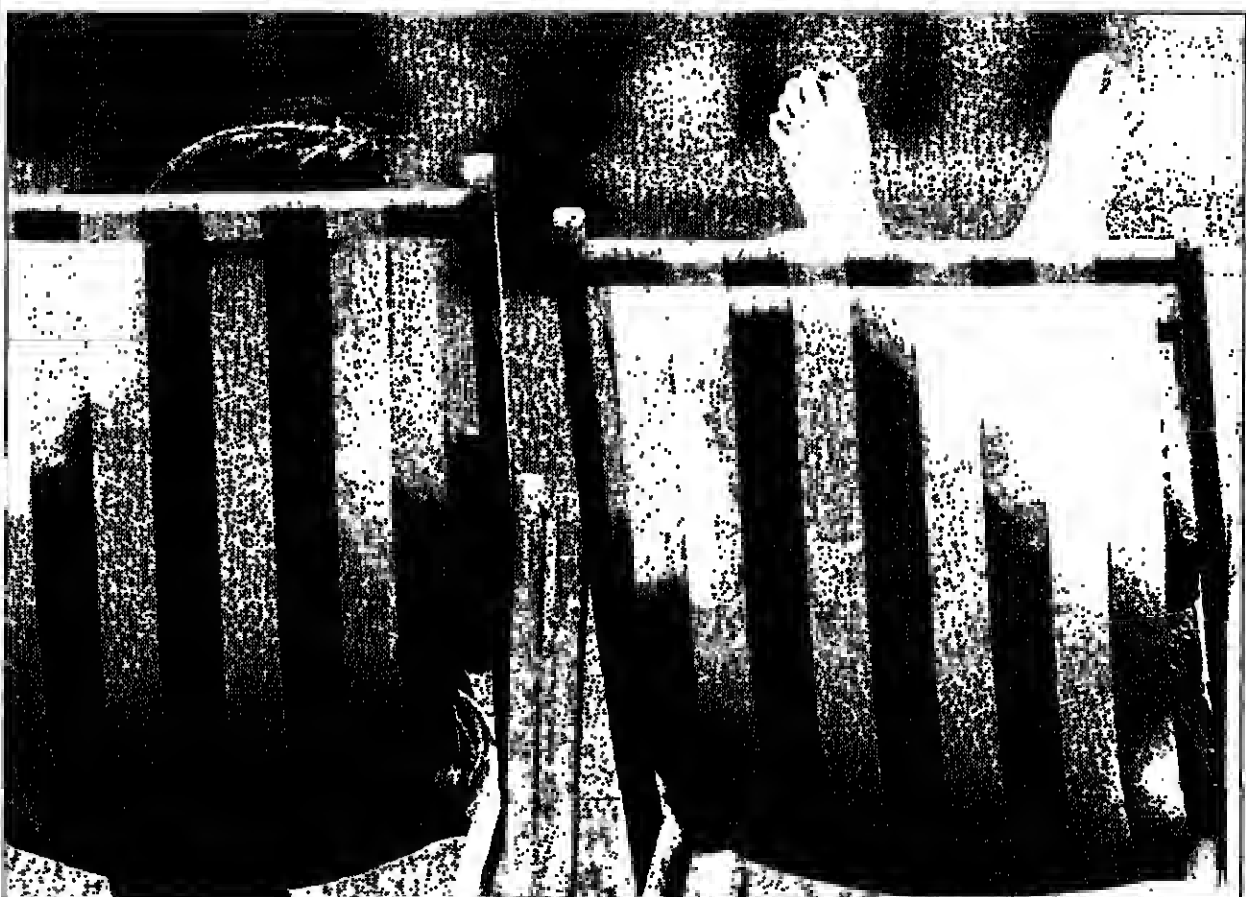
Instead, he fashions the music into a free fantasy on Wagner's motifs, as if a latter-day Liszt had decided to concoct one of his concert paraphrases on the Ring and enlist the help of a huge symphony orchestra (including six horns, though, alas, no Wagner tubas) and a hyperactive solo percussionist.

First and foremost the piece is a vehicle for Glennie. From the moment she alights onto the platform during the opening bars to scrape out a menacing rhythm she is the centre of attention, visually charting the course of the work as she moves from one group of instruments to the next.

She progresses from noisy and fast, through slow and quiet to even faster and noisier.

Her virtuosity, combined with Rouse's deft scoring both for the vast array of exotic percussion and for the orchestra itself (the London Symphony, which performed expertly under Martin Altop), relegates the tawdry musical material to secondary importance, save as a meretricious way of giving the audience something familiar to latch on to while they watch Glennie's compelling routine.

It makes for good theatre, but it is a vacuous and brazen piece.



Tourists enjoying St James's park, central London, yesterday as warm air chased away the cold PHOTOGRAPH: ALASTAIR GRANT

Gases made 1990s hottest in 550 years

John Eazard

THREE of the last eight years have been the hottest in the northern hemisphere for six centuries — and greenhouse gases have emerged as the "dominant" culprit.

This is the finding of research issued yesterday which uses a new method to plot climate change since the Middle Ages.

The method bypasses the lack of weather records for most of this period by measuring and synthesising evidence from a broad range of sources including tree rings, polar ice, coral reefs and recorded information.

The research — published

in the science journal Nature — finds that in 1990, 1995 and 1997 average northern temperatures were the highest since at least 1400.

Solar radiation and dust from volcanic eruptions have contributed to this extraordinary change, according to geoscientists and tree specialists from the universities of Massachusetts and Arizona.

But "greenhouse gases emerged as the dominant force" as the world industrialised in the 20th century. Change forced by these gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, showed no significant impact until "a large positive correlation" was found in various sources of evidence.

The results support warnings of rapid temperature rises mainly caused by gases from electricity generation, motor vehicles, factories, home heating and cooking, rotting vegetation in landfills, rice-growing and the digestive processes of termites and cows. Termites generate 20 per cent of the world's methane.

The researchers were able to trace in detail the effects of earlier unusual weather patterns. These include the northern hemisphere's "year without summer" of 1816, influenced by the eruption of Mount Tamora in Indonesia.

The geoscientists, led by Michael Mann from Massachusetts university, say

new techniques may soon make it possible to reconstruct average world temperatures during the whole millennium — and determine better the role of man-made factors on climate.

Days after heavy rain and flooding brought chaos to Britain, the country yesterday enjoyed its warmest day of the year.

At lunchtime, temperatures at London's Gatwick airport reached 21°C (70°F) — around 7°C hotter than normal — before wet weather returned to the South.

Michael Dukes, of the PA WeatherCentre, said the sunshine was the result of a "very brief surge" of warm air that had come up from France.

Gold loans may leave Bank with bad debts

Dan Atkinson

SPECULATORS and dealers who have borrowed British gold reserves worth as much as £300 million may be unable to repay the Bank of England, industry sources warned last night.

A rising bullion price raised the spectre of defaults by borrowers who have enjoyed more than a decade of easy profits in their dealings with central banks.

One senior industry figure warned that some of the nation's gold was now in jewellery form, hanging around the necks of overseas consumers, and could not be reclaimed in a crisis.

Central banks, including the Bank of England, have become enthusiastic lenders of bullion during the past 10 years, accepting low interest rates in return for shedding the responsibility of storing and securing their reserves.

As long as the price kept falling, everyone was happy, particularly the speculators who were able to repay the Bank and other central banks with gold that was cheaper than it had been when they had borrowed it.

But the price has moved up 12 per cent since January and was rising again yesterday. Now speculators who borrowed Britain's gold and sold it on to others, including jewellery makers — might have to buy more expensive bullion bars elsewhere to cover their debts. Were significant numbers unable to do so, the resultant turmoil could threaten London's pivotal position in the international gold market.

The crunch could be exacerbated by the increasing tendency of all central banks to widen their lists of approved borrowers, thus taking in organisations with lower credit ratings. An analyst warned yesterday that credit

ratings were all very well during normal times but "gold should be there for an abnormal occasion".

Central banks have traditionally held gold as a "bed-rock" asset with which to back their currencies. Only the Swiss franc is still explicitly backed by a given quantity of bullion. However, other trading nations have kept highly visible gold reserves close at hand.

Until this year speculators have enjoyed a one-way bet in their dealings with central banks. They have borrowed gold at a low rate of interest, sold it for dollars and invested the dollars at a higher rate of interest.

When the time came to repay the gold, the price — sliding almost without interruption from its near \$1,000-an-ounce peak in January 1980 — would have fallen further, meaning a tidy gain for the speculators on top of the profit they would have made from investing in dollars.

One analyst said yesterday: "It has been a money machine." Bullion banks and other players had made huge profits in their dealings with the Bank of England, he said.

But the gold price has bounced back from an 18-year low in January, and yesterday was up from \$307.5 an ounce to \$312.75.

One source warned some bullion banks might be particularly vulnerable, as they were in the position of borrowing short-term from the Bank to lend longer-term to speculators, jewellery manufacturers and others. He added that all involved in borrowing from central banks had behaved as if the price would drop forever and that the loans could always be repaid in cheaper gold.

It is not known what proportion of Britain's 573 tonnes of gold is on loan, but the international average is about 10 per cent of reserves.

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I am sitting on a long middle aged lady am hoping that later strange. He's been Gina Foster meets D

World Cup scramble



Joanna Russell: England tickets PHOTOGRAPH BY GREGOR MCMURRIE



Kajil Ullah: that won't do nicely PHOTOGRAPH BY SIMON ROBERTS



Mark Thomas: could have had more PHOTOGRAPH BY BARRY GOMER

Winner

What you need to get what you want from life is persistence and a good redial button, according to Joanna Russell, who got tickets for all England's games from the hotline.

Ms Russell, a breakfast radio presenter from Derby, started off ringing the line for her show, but then kept going afterwards. "By the time we had gone off air I still hadn't got through and everyone was telling me to give up," she said. "Every one was telling me it was a waste of time, but I was determined to get those tickets. I still don't know how I did it."

"I still can't believe I got through and I've actually got World Cup tickets — I feel like Charlie in Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory when he finds the golden ticket, it's a great feeling."

"I would have accepted any tickets for any match, but the operator asked what I wanted and I told her I was after England tickets. When she found some available I couldn't believe it. I nearly had a heart attack when she gave me a quote of 350 — I was so excited I thought she meant pounds instead of francs."

Loser

Kajil Ullah knows the meaning of the word frustration. Like the man whose winning lottery ticket was destroyed in the wash, Kajil beat odds of 2 million to one and lost out on an agonising cock-up. He got through to the World Cup hotline and then had to hang up because they would not accept his credit card.

Mr Ullah, a student from Sheffield who worked as a baggage handler at Heathrow to fund a dream trip to the World Cup, hit the hotline at 7am when it opened and carried on through three hours of telephone torture.

"I dialled and dialled for three hours solid. I couldn't believe it when I finally got through. I booked up tickets for five World Cup games and the woman told me the cost would be £320. Then she asked for my bank card number — but after keying it into her computer she told me it didn't work. I couldn't understand why there was a problem because I have saved £1,000 especially for this trip in the account. Then she asked what sort of card it was. When I said Delta she told me the card was not recognised in France and I had to hang up."

Score Draw

Many people might say that Mark Thomas is mad. But they're just jealous. Because after getting through to the hotline he has tickets for Saudi Arabia v Denmark, Croatia v Jamaica, Holland v Belgium and Germany v United States. And they don't.

"Those were the games I wanted to see," he said. "I've been planning for months to go out there, tickets or not."

"I rang from home, then I went to work and luckily it's a small office and I was able to keep hitting the phone and eventually after a

few hours I got through. I am supporting England, but these are four games in a row that I want to see. I support Derby so Croatia is almost my own team anyway."

Mr Thomas didn't use his full entitlement. "I got 12 tickets from four matches when they said you could have 16 from four. I suppose I should have got the extra ones but it was a thing of the moment, I wasn't thinking."

He nearly didn't get anything. "I realised I'd left my credit card at home. I had to ring my wife and ask her to give me her number."

Vegetarian victim of human BSE dies

James Melkide

VEGETARIAN Clare Tomkins, whose father gave moving evidence just six weeks ago to the BSE inquiry about his frustration and despair at being unable to stop her succumbing to the human version of the disease, died yesterday.

She is believed to be the 25th person to have died from human BSE.

Miss Tomkins, aged 24, from East Peckham, Kent, died in the arms of her father.

She had been a vegetarian since 1965, and yet was diagnosed as suffering from what is officially called new variant CJD, which was linked two years ago to BSE in cattle.

Her case may show how long the incubation period for the disease can be, since she ate beefburgers, hot dogs and other meat before she became a vegetarian.

She may have been infected long before the disease was officially identified in cows in 1986. Her family did not notice that anything was wrong until autumn 1996.

Roger Tomkins, an engineering company director, said last night: "Clare had been slightly deteriorating over the last couple of weeks, but she passed away very peacefully in my arms at 5.45 this morning."

"At that particular time it was just myself, but my wife Dawn and Clare's fiancé, Andrew Seale, came in shortly afterwards."

"I phoned her sister Lisa and my son-in-law Stuart straight away, and they have also been at our home all day."

"It was very peaceful. There was no drama, no suffering. She just looked at me and then took her last breath before passing away."

"The important thing for us is that she is now at peace."

He added: "She has really fought hard. During that time we've all been together and we have had so much to talk to her about. Even if she hasn't responded, we've assumed she's been listening."

"Clare was just a very good girl. She loved animals and that's what we all remember her for, her fun loving life."

He said that after an autopsy to establish exactly

how she died, there would be a memorial service at the family's local church.

The family had not yet decided on funeral arrangements.

Miss Tomkins, who worked in the pet department of a local garden centre until she fell ill, had been a keen horse rider.

She underwent months of tests and treatment at several hospitals, and was sectioned under the Mental Health Act, before she was diagnosed as suffering from nvCJD.

Mr Tomkins told the inquiry last month: "That was the moment when the theoretical light at the end of the tunnel began to close down."

During her illness she lost weight and degenerated into a tormented patient, racked by involuntary movements, unable to walk unaided, howling like a tormented animal.

At the end she was bed-bound, doubly incontinent, needing round-the-clock nursing and an automatic pump to clear her saliva.

Her mother Dawn has been diagnosed as having ovarian cancer, which Mr Tomkins believes has been triggered by Clare's illness.

Four livestock inspectors have been suspended by the Meat and Livestock Commission after allegations that documents showed fewer BSE-infected cattle being destroyed at an incineration plant near Wrexham than arrived for disposal.

Six years over CJD fears, page 5

40 million try to get through

continued from page 1

football fans with contempt. "Callers from Britain had a series of barriers to overcome before getting through."

First, BT had agreed to limit the number of calls allowed into the French system to 100,000 in the first 60 minutes and 50,000 an hour thereafter. Those above the limit heard a recorded message saying that the number was unavailable, or simply a dead or engaged tone.

If they made it through to France Telecom's network they were most likely to receive a message asking them to call later. Fast that stage was another message, with music, saying the line was occupied. After that the line might ring for 12 rings and then cut out.

Two Farnborough students, Jack Horry and Jason Burton, called the hotline 25,000 times on five phones, but still

failed to get through. "It's been a real nightmare, the French system is in complete chaos," said Mr Horry. "It's really unfair that they are giving their own fans so many tickets."

It wasn't easy for the French either. One French radio station said it had 10 phones programmed to redial the number automatically for French callers from 8am to midday, and did not get through once.

In the Netherlands, telephone exchanges in Amsterdam and Rotterdam collapsed under the weight of calls. The Dutch operator PTT Telecom said it recorded 2 million calls in the first hour, and 5 million by midday. Phone traffic was so heavy that between 8am and 9pm as many as 40 per cent of routine calls failed in the most heavily populated part of the country between Amsterdam, The

Hague and Rotterdam, a spokeswoman said.

"This is basically France Telecom's fault," she said. "I don't know what they were thinking of. We could have installed a telecommunications super-highway into France to handle the number of callers, but what's the point if you've only got 50 people to answer at the other end?"

In Belgium, Belgacom reported that it coped with more than 2 million calls yesterday morning — the equivalent of one Belgian in five.

The Italian system held up well, mainly because the telephone number was barely publicised in the country that hosted the 1990 World Cup.

A spokeswoman for the Italian football federation said the number had been given to Italian news agencies. Only one ran the story and it did not appear in many newspapers. "It was not ex-

actly front page news."

The matter was raised during Prime Ministers Questions in the House of Commons, when Tony Blair promised that he was in touch with the French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, about improving the allocation of tickets to British fans.

One innocent victim of yesterday's telecom ticket dash was Maria-Pia Brown, of Southend, Essex, whose number is the same as the hotline's but without the international code. "Obviously people were forgetting to dial the first two zeros," said Mrs Brown, a retired florist, who was woken with the first call at 7.01am.

"The caller said something about tickets and I said he must have the wrong number. But the phone then didn't stop ringing until about 8.30am, when I asked BT to do something about it."

Tacky, cheap and shiny

The Spice Girls and Echo & The Bunnymen have teamed up on England's official World Cup 98 anthem. Caroline Sullivan gives her verdict.

THE one delight of On Top Of The World is the way it, reduces pop-faced musicians to hysterical 10-year-olds, imitating moody stars in a riot of tag-dancing exuberance. It's a worth the price of admission to hear the lead singers of veteran gloomsters Echo & The Bunnymen and organic soul-boys Ocean Colour Scene cavorting through lines such as "In streets all over the nation/Are goals we painted on the walls/All our hopes and expectations/Are the world inside a ball".

Otherwise, England United's effort is the Big Ticket lottery of pop songs — tacky, cheap and shiny, with the

Spice Girls standing in for Anthea Turner. Les Girls are actually the most dignified thing about it, in as much as they don't turn up till close to the end. After prolonged assault by jaunty trumpets and vocals that would score nul points on Eurovision the Spices are a welcome feminine counterpoint.

Football songs are historically required to be bad. This one can take its place alongside both 1996's Baddiel-Skiner-Lightning Seeds effort and 1990's New Order ditty. The latter featured footballers grunting the chorus and a rap by the unappetising singer in pop, Bernard Sumner. On Top Of The World contains neither. Whether footballers and rapping would have improved it will only be clear after we've heard it many times, which, unfortunately, we will.

On Top of the World

How does it feel to be on top of the world
Now it's for real, we're on top of the world
Looking like it's gonna happen
Knowing that the time is right
With pride on our side and the passion
We've got glory in our sights
In streets all over the nation
Are goals we painted on the walls
All our hopes and expectations
Are the world inside a ball

Three Lions (new version)

Talk about football coming home
And then one night in Rome
We were strong
We had grown
And now I see
I'm ready for war
Gazza good as before
Shearer certain to score
And Psycho screaming
Three Lions on a shirt
Jules Rimet still gleaming
No more years of hurt
No more need for dreaming
We can dance Nobby's dance
We could dance it in France
It's coming home
It's coming home
Football's coming home

I am sitting on a large pink sofa having a cup of tea. A middle aged lady sits opposite me. We are chatting and I am hoping that later I might see my father. This is strange. He's been dead for 25 years.
Gina Rozner meets Di and Dodi's clairvoyant

G2 page 7

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Routine over-use is encouraging new strains of bacteria which are resistant to antibiotics. **Paul Brown and Sarah Boseley report**

Medicine's over-performed miracle

How to turn the tide

Health authorities should encourage more prudent use of antibiotics by GPs, who should be trained to resist pressure from patients

Government and health authorities must do more to educate the public — particularly mothers of young children — about antibiotics

A cross-departmental government committee on antibiotic use should be set up

Antibiotic growth promoters in animals should be phased out, voluntarily or by legislation if necessary

Vets must introduce a code of practice on the use of drugs of importance to human medicine

Resources should be given to infection control and basic hygiene in hospitals

The Department of Health should reconsider proposed cuts in its budget for the Public Health Laboratory Service

THE Government was urged yesterday to develop a strategy to check the use of antibiotics by doctors and farmers, in the face of proof that they are becoming ineffective against some infections.

Routine overuse of antibiotics against minor ailments in humans and to promote growth in animals — particularly poultry — has allowed new strains of bacteria to develop which are resistant to what were considered cure-all miracle drugs when they were developed in the 1930s and 1940s. Before the antibiotic age, people were shut away to die of tuberculosis in



Bacteria magnified 3,000 times (left), which can cause pulmonary tuberculosis. Right, a woman takes an antibiotic tablet used to treat infections of the skin, chest, throat and ears

PHOTOGRAPHS: SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY



One third of children under two 'given alcohol by their parents'

Babies offered drink at family events or to help them sleep

Raziah Nicol

NEARLY one in three babies have experienced the effects of alcohol before they have reached the age of two, a conference heard yesterday.

Many young children are fed small doses of alcohol by their parents because of their reaction or to help them sleep.

According to Elizabeth Murphy, a senior lecturer in sociology at Nottingham University, one mother she had interviewed had exclaimed: "You ought to have seen his face!" after her child had been given a sip of whisky.

"He wouldn't move," she said. "He wouldn't breathe. He was in shock."

Dr Murphy was reporting

the results of a small survey she had carried out to the Economic and Social Research Council's Second National Diet Conference in central London.

"Alcohol appears to act as a way of incorporating the baby into the adult world of the family, particularly at parties and family gatherings," she said. "Babies were given tastes of alcohol and babies who liked alcohol were a source of entertainment."

Dr Murphy had followed the lives of 36 new mothers for 24 years, interviewing them regularly about the eating habits of their babies. She found 10 of them had been given alcohol.

Most of the 10 had been given a taste of drink "as part of a family celebration," she said. "Only one, or two at the

most, had given their child alcohol to help them sleep."

Mark Bennett of Alcohol Concern said he was surprised by the number of parents happy to do this. "Alcohol is a toxic substance as well as being a drug and its effects on children are much stronger," he said. "If they are being given it as a sort of diversion for the parents then you've got to question their motives for being parents. And that is apart from the fact it is illegal to give alcohol to children under the age of five."

Dr Murphy told the 200 delegates at the Royal Society of Medicine that she thought parents were amused at the reaction of their babies because they knew infants and alcohol made inappropriate partners.

"Drinking is an adult behaviour and babies who not only drink alcohol, but appear to enjoy it, transgress a recognised boundary between

babyhood and adulthood," she said.

She told the conference that one mother had given her a run-down on her baby's preferred tipsies. "He likes cider and he likes lager and lime, mild, he likes that," the mother said. "He likes his dad's cider as well, he takes it out of a glass."

Another had used wine to help her child sleep, but said that it was "not even half a glass full".

Donald Nalmsmith, a professor of nutrition at King's College London, said that even a little alcohol goes a long way for a toddler: "A sip of whisky for a baby is the equivalent probably of four double whiskeys for an adult."

"Children used to be given gripe water containing 5 per cent alcohol, but this has now been discontinued."

But the professor said it was unlikely that any small child would develop a strong taste for alcohol.

Doctors in the UK are

accused by the committee of being profligate with antibiotics, over-prescribing by 30 to 50 per cent. The committee also calls for a higher priority for "basic hygiene" in hospitals to prevent the spread of a super bug called MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus). This has been rendered untreatable because farmers have been using antibiotics similar to Methicillin to make their livestock grow 5 per cent faster, the committee said.

Mothers with young children needed to be educated not to demand antibiotics, while GPs needed to be encouraged to just say no. The committee said people in

poorer communities may have more expectation of receiving antibiotics, or their doctors could be more pressed for time and so found it easier to prescribe than explain why it was not a good idea.

The committee recommends a public education campaign, including the use of advertising in women's magazines to warn of the dangers.

There was pressure both from the pharmaceutical industry and the regulators, particularly in the EU, to allow at least some antibiotics for complaints such as cystitis to be sold over the counter.

The committee was strongly against the sale of antibiotics

for internal use over the counter, and commended the Government and the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries for their strong stand against it. Government has constantly been warned about the dangers of over-using antibiotics on farm stock but refused to take action.

Evidence to the committee was that for 20 years farmers had been using the antibiotic Avoparcin to promote growth. The potential dangers to human health were known as long ago as 1969 when the Swann committee warned that excessive use of drugs in veterinary medicine might affect human health.

It suggested an expert committee be formed to look out for warning signs.

This was never created, but when a sub-committee of the Government's veterinary products committee requested funds to look at the problem in 1981 it was refused and the committee abolished.

The Government also opposed the European Commission when it suspended the use of Avoparcin from April 1, 1997 because they feared it increased bacterial resistance to the closely related antibiotic Vancomycin, used in hospitals against life-threatening infections. Richard Wise, scientific adviser to the committee, yesterday quoted four ex-

amples of drugs used on animals which had been responsible for making bacteria untreatable when they attacked humans.

The committee was also concerned that antibiotics were being used to treat diseases in plants and in genetic engineering.

This gave further opportunities for diseases to develop resistance and then attack man.

One of the key organisations to monitor the problem, the Public Health Laboratory Service, was being cut back by the Government. One of the key recommendations of the committee was that its funding be reinstated.

Former gangster 'Mad Frankie' wins role in television commercial

Drinks firm looks to London for aggressive male image

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

MAD Frankie Fraser always had a reputation for being "persuasive" so perhaps it is not surprising that his skills should have been spotted by the advertising industry.

The former south London gangster is soon to appear in a commercial for Campari.

Fraser has already been completed on a commercial which will form part of a £3 million advertising campaign for the Milan-based drinks company. The aim is to give the drink a more aggressively male image.

The plan had been to keep quiet about the commercial

until it appeared on May 4, as the agency responsible, Mellors Reay, feared trouble over the use of a former villain. Last night it confirmed that it is ready to run, and pointed out that Mr Fraser, who has an extra's role in the commercial, had served his time.

Also taking part are Jimmy Percy, the former member of punk band Sham '69 and Rodney Marsh, the former Queen's Park Rangers footballer.

"This ad is very real," said creative director Tim Mellors last night. "Real faces, not models, in a real bar."

Mr Fraser himself was in uncharacteristically bashful mood when contacted at his north London home yesterday, but politely



Mad Frankie Fraser: aim is to give advert authenticity

referred callers to the agency to confirm his involvement.

There are a few precedents for a crime angle in commercials. Comedians Hale and Face have adver-

tised Clorets, the mouth freshener, in their personas of Ron and Ron, based on the Kray Twins. At the other end of the scale Bruce Forsyth has recently impersonated a judge in Courts furniture commercials.

Former police chiefs have advertised tyres and double glazing.

In any case, the choice of someone with such a long criminal record as Mr Fraser's may turn out to be appropriate for a drinks firm: figures released by the Home Office this week indicate that 25 per cent of those arrested have been drinking.

For Mr Fraser, who has built a showbusiness career since his release from jail, there could also be other opportunities available.

He might even win a grateful nation's thanks by playing the getaway driver who finally nicks Nicole and Papa's Renault.

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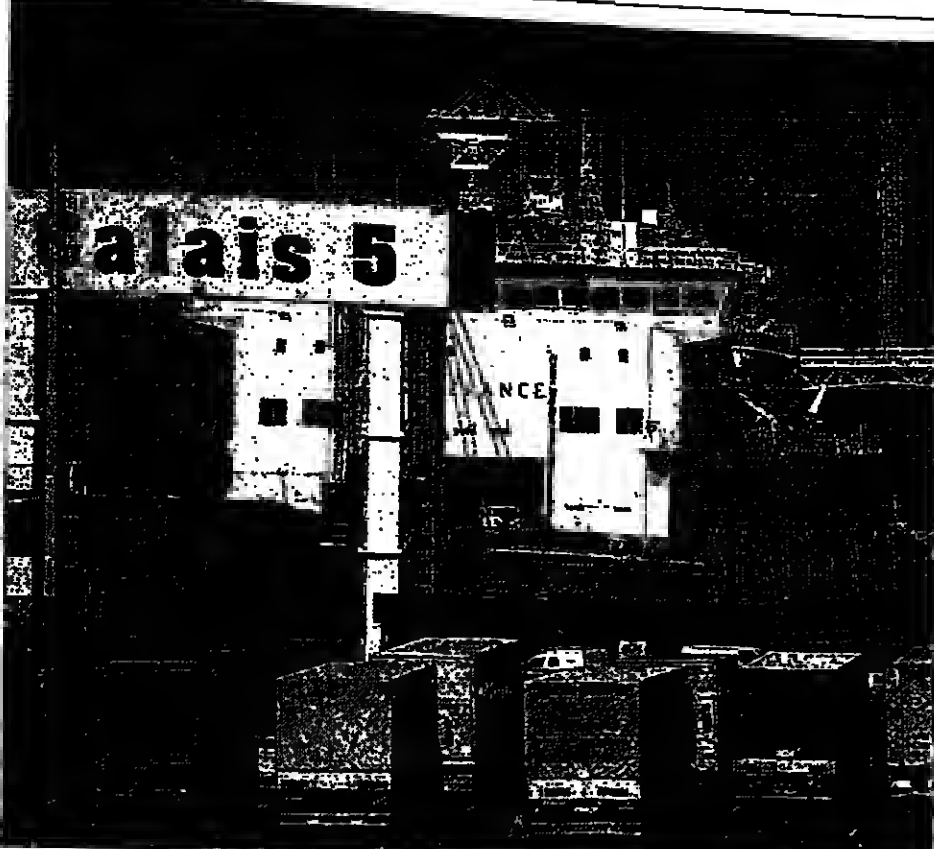
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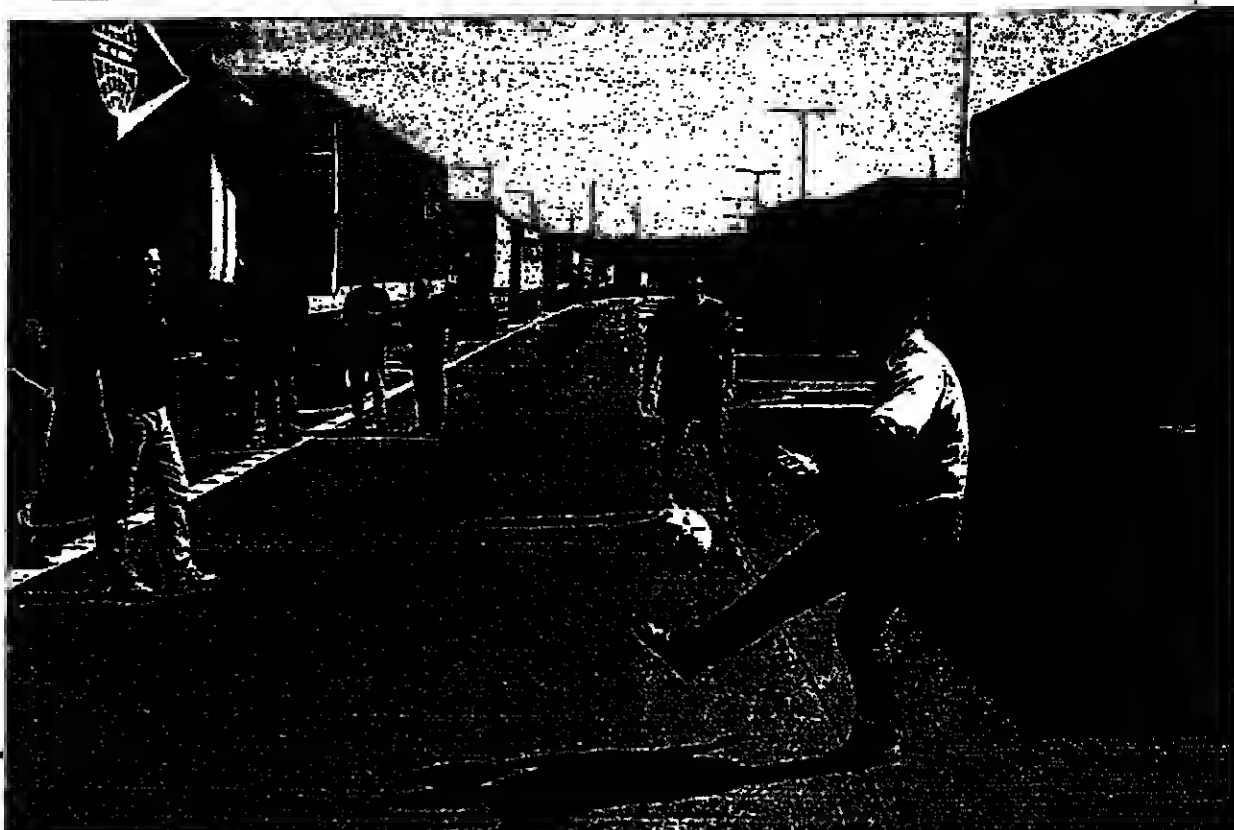
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Channel chaos eases as strikers allow ferries to dock

The backlog of lorries at Calais, and, right, drivers pass the time near Dover with a game of football



Rory Carroll

CHAOS at the Channel Tunnel eased last night after striking French lorry drivers and travellers to cross the Channel after delays of up to eight hours.

Kent and at Calais began to move as strikers allowed two ferries to dock in a "goodwill" gesture. They said P & O traffic between Dover and Calais could resume but that the strike would continue, leaving the haulage industry to count the cost of the two-day blockade, estimated at more than £1 million.

Hopes of avoiding further disruption rest on negotiations between the French unions and the state-owned SeaFrance ferry company. The dispute — over the withdrawal of a sailor's licence after he was convicted of a drug trafficking offence — prompted British freight organisations to demand that French authorities crack

down on what has become a series of stoppages at Calais. The French unions, the CGT and CFDT, agreed to lift the blockade as a precondition to meeting management. Trapped trucks were not grateful. One Irish driver boarding a ferry said: "I am pleased to be getting back home but I don't really thank the French workers — this is

all just a performance to get what they want." Some frustrated truckers left Calais for the Belgian port of Zeebrugge minutes before the lifting of the blockade, reducing the queue of lorries from 500 to 150. Channel Tunnel car shuttle trains ran normally but lorry drivers taking the freight shuttles faced four-hour de-

lays at Folkestone and seven-hour waits in Calais. Dave Seaton, from York, was angry that the fifth stoppage in 18 months forced him to stay in his cab overnight. "It is just getting ridiculous. Every time we come to Calais we get stuck in another strike. There is nothing we can do but wait here. We haven't been given any

meal vouchers or facilities. The French can get away with this kind of thing — if you did it in Britain you would be arrested." In addition to supporting the sailor, the French unions are demanding more staff on ships, an extra SeaFrance sailing a day, increased salaries and better working conditions.

One member of the CFDT (the Confédération Française de Transport) said: "We have a lot of support. The strike will last until he is given back his seacock and allowed to sail." British ferry sources blamed the disputes on the reluctance of the French government to take on militants in SeaFrance.

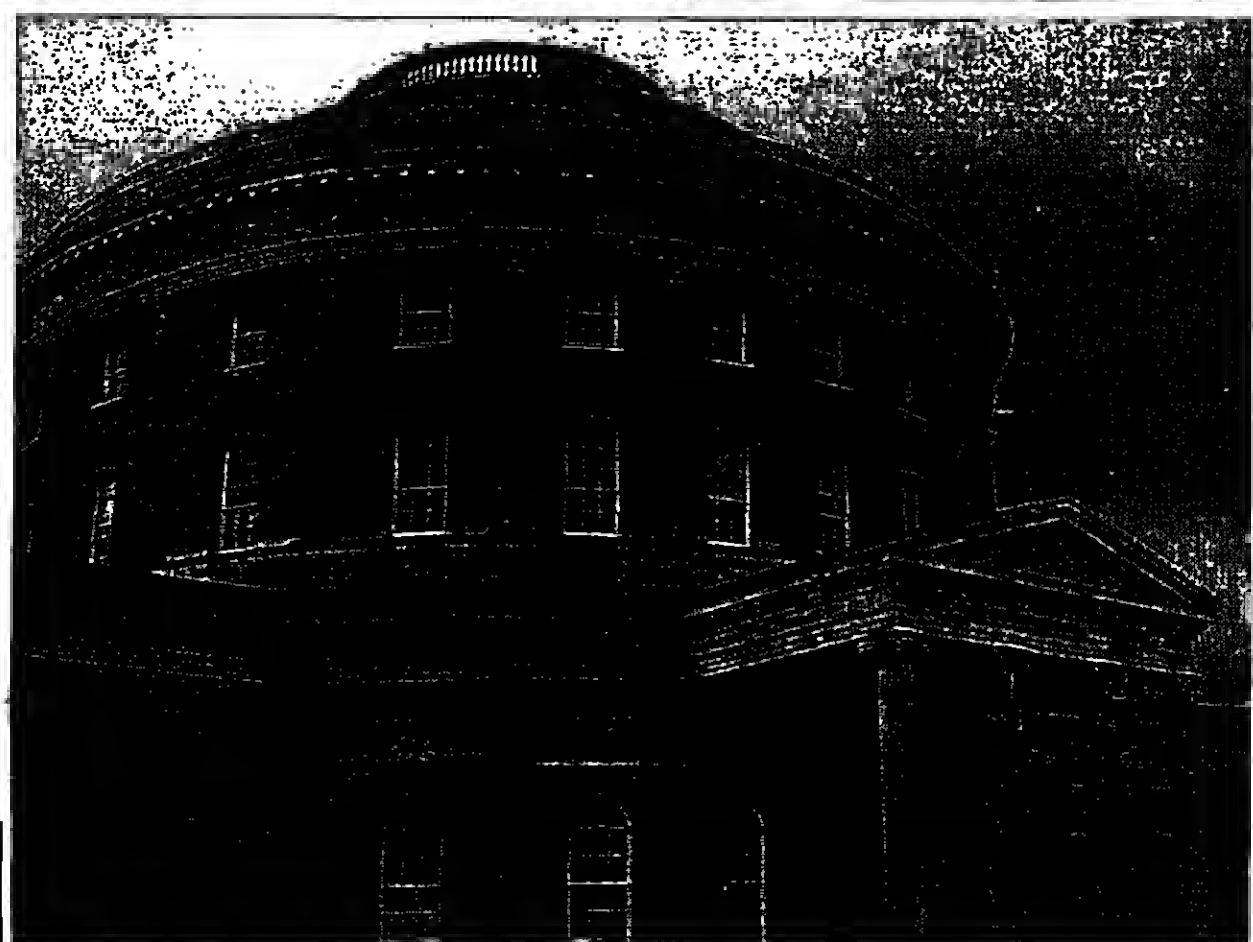
Peer sells stake in ancestral mansion

Maey Kennedy on the Marquess of Bristol's move to swap history for National Trust cash



The Marquess of Bristol (above) has been imprisoned twice for drugs possession. His lawyer once told a court in mitigation that his client had spent £7 million on drugs

ANOTHER high profile society separation was announced yesterday: between the Marquess of Bristol and the National Trust. Relations between them had grown increasingly strained over recent years, and they no longer had any interests in common. Their last link was the home they shared, the palatial Ickworth House in Suffolk. The marquess has just severed that connection, for an undisclosed sum of money. The marquess who once estimated his personal fortune at £30 million, moved out of the 60-room wing of his ancestral mansion in 1996, claiming it cost him £350,000 a year to maintain. The career of the 7th Marquess of Bristol, aged 48, is generally politely described as "colourful" or "troubled". His regular need for large sums of money, either for acquiring expensive habits or treat-



Ickworth House, home of the Marquess of Bristol, was built in 1795 by the eccentric 4th earl. It has two classical wings and a huge central drum

ing them, became legendary, and he has been imprisoned twice for drug possession. His lawyer once explained in mitigation that his client had spent £7 million on drugs. In 1996, fresh from a rehabilitation clinic, he announced that he was not dying of AIDS, as a tabloid had claimed, but moving to the Bahamas. He subsequently sold some of his families most ancient titles for more than £50,000, and held what was dubbed a "society car hoot sale", clearing out almost all his family possessions from Ickworth, and most of his cherished cars, for £2.5 million. The trust acquired the family with the house in 1956, in a deal in lieu of

death duties after the death of the 5th marquess. His son leased back the east wing, which had been the Hervey family home since 1830, and the present marquess became the National Trust's highest profile and most difficult tenant in 1979. Negotiations to buy back the lease have been going on for the last two years. Paul Dickson of the trust's regional office, said it was forbidden under the agreement to disclose what they paid to buy out the remaining 64 years of the marquess's lease on the east wing. Ickworth was built by an ancestor regarded as eccentric even by Hervey standards: the bishop earl. The 4th earl was also a bishop

in Northern Ireland and was far more interested in architecture than religion, although he did organise curate races — with heavy betting — on the sands at Downhill, in Northern Ireland. He also built a pagan round "temple of the winds" at Downhill, which was partly the model for his 1795 house in Suffolk. It has two symmetrical classical wings — one never much more than a shell — and a huge central drum. He built it to house his huge collection of paintings and sculpture, intending to put the paintings in the east wing and the family in the dome. His son reversed the scheme, and the east wing remained the principal family home until two

years ago. The marquess's agent, Simon Pott, said: "Ickworth has been a wonderful place for him to live, but it was just too expensive. The marquess will continue to pursue his many interests, such as his car collection, and circulating with his many friends." As well as his home in the Bahamas, he also has a five bedroom period farmhouse, Little Horringer Hall. He still owns some farm land and houses, a fraction of the original estate, and a church. He bought the 13th century Ickworth Church, when it became redundant in 1882, and was married there in 1994. The marriage did not last, and the grade II* listed church now needs an estimated £200,000 worth of repairs.

Six sue over fears about getting CJD

James Melkie

PEOPLE who fear that their treatment for stunted growth may lead to their contracting an incurable brain disease, yesterday launched a test case to sue the Government for mental injury. They developed psychiatric illnesses because they had been told they may be incubating the agent for Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease after being treated "negligently" with human growth hormone, the High Court in London was told. Paul Andrews, aged 32, Neil Scanlon, 36, David Lockhart, 27, brother and sister Philip and Claire Johnson, 25 and 29 and Justin Parkes, 27, have been selected as representative cases to indicate a range of psychiatric injury — severe, moderate and mild. Their counsel, Stephen Irwin QC, said there were 29 other cases in the so-called group B CJD litigation. The Health Secretary had admitted in the case of four of the six people that psychiatric illness had been caused by learning of the risk of developing CJD, but there was a dispute over the severity of their illness and damages that might be recoverable. Parents of children who

died after being given growth hormone from corpses to combat dwarfism launched their cases in 1996. Nearly 2,000 British children whose growth was stunted because of failures in their own pituitary glands had such treatment between 1959 and 1985. It was coded after several children treated in the US died of CJD. In July 1996 Mr Justice Morland, who is hearing the cases, ruled that the Department of Health was negligent in not heeding a warning in 1977 about the risk of contracting CJD from the hormone treatment. Mr Irwin said that at the close of a CJD hearing in May 1996, 16 recipients of the growth hormone had died or were dying of CJD. "Less than two years on, the total number of those who have died or who are dying has risen to 27." As a result of the Government's negligence, the six were exposed to the reasonably foreseeable risk of psychiatric damage. CJD was "an illness with a prolonged incubation period and an agonising and invariably fatal neurodegenerative progression", he said. The six suffered varying degrees of psychiatric illness which had affected their lives and jobs, Mr Irwin said.

Brain damage victim awarded £2.3m for hospital blunder

AMAN who has pursued an academic career despite suffering serious brain damage at birth was yesterday awarded £2,325,000 agreed damages. Peter Pearce was left grossly disabled, with cerebral palsy affecting all four limbs and his speech, after the use of forceps at his birth at the Barnet Victoria maternity hospital, north London, in December 1970. He operates an electric wheelchair with his left hand, which retains limited use, and types into his computer mainly by using his nose. Mr Pearce, of Golders Green, north west London, has used his IQ of 130 to win a second class degree in

psychology from Nottingham university and is working for a PhD. He was not at the High Court in London to hear his counsel, Robin de Wilde QC, tell Mr Justice Allott that the 27-year-old was determined to use his mind to the best of his capacity. Mr de Wilde said Mr Pearce did not realise he had a claim until five years ago, when his mother read a newspaper article about birth trauma. The judge approved the award against Barnet health authority, which admitted liability. Gregory Chambers, representing the authority, described Mr Pearce as a "wholly exceptional person".

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INTERNATIONAL

£1m fine for Spanish fishermen over quotas

Geoffrey Gibbs

SPANISH fishermen have been ordered to pay more than £1 million in fines and costs by a judge at Herefordshire crown court, Herefordshire, after pleading guilty to 100 offences of over-fishing in western waters. The hefty fines, imposed yesterday, followed a three-year investigation by British and Irish fishery protection vessels. Prosecutors told the court that some of the cases represented the grossest examples of over-fishing ever detected. One trawler was found to have netted more than 100 times its quota of monkfish. The fines were welcomed by the fisheries minister, Elliot Morley, but failed to placate British fishing industry leaders, for whom the issue of foreign-owned quota hopping vessels has long been a running sore. Spanish-owned vessels registered in Britain account for about 30 per cent of British fish quotas in western waters while Dutch-owned vessels take about 40 per cent of the North Sea quota.

Jim Portus, chief executive of the South Western Fish Producers Organisation, said the fines represented only 1 per cent of Spanish quota-hoppers' annual earnings. Yet one of the skippers involved had been found with 8 per cent of the entire UK quota of angler fish. "That is a large proportion of what is available to the whole UK industry and is picking the bread and butter out of other people's mouths. I am not impressed with the fine that's been imposed for that sort of level of offence. The minister should consider removing that vessel's licence." Twelve fishing companies — all registered in Milford Haven but sailing from La Coruna in northern Spain — were fined a total of £984,600 and ordered to pay £68,500 in costs after admitting 100 offences of exceeding quotas, catching protected species and falsifying log books. Ten skippers were fined a total of £26,500. Ordering the skippers not to leave the court until written guarantees had been given by their companies that the fines would be paid, Judge Martin Stephens said he

wanted the fines to be a deterrent to others. He did not suspend the companies' licences because it would have prevented them paying the fines. The court had heard that one of the trawlers, the Serrano Hevia, was licensed to catch just two tonnes of angler fish but was found with 128 tonnes on board. Another vessel, the Eder Sands, netted seven tonnes of hake when the stocks of the species were so low that the fishing grounds had been officially closed. A member of the Ministry of Agriculture inspectorate team that brought the prosecution, said the Spanish vessels had been "putting two fingers up" to the quota system. The ministry said it was satisfied the court had recognised the severity of the offences and it was now up to the courts to make sure the fines were paid. One of the companies involved has still not paid a fine imposed for a previous conviction for overfishing. A distress warrant has been issued and the firm's trawler will be arrested if it puts into a British port.

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6 WORLD NEWS

Nigeria poll sets quandary for Commonwealth

Isa Black
Diplomatic Editor

BRITAIN and its Commonwealth partners are facing serious problems over how to respond to Nigeria's abandonment of any pretence that it is planning to restore multi-party civilian democracy.

Confirmation that August's presidential election will now have only one candidate — the present ruler, General Sani Abacha — will force an early and divisive decision on whether to implement limited sanctions.

On Monday Gen Abacha secured the backing of the last of the five officially-approved political parties, which means the poll will require voters to say only whether they support him.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, is to discuss the issue with the United States

'This is an acid test for the UK's ethical foreign policy. There is no longer any excuse for inaction'

secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, when they meet before next month's G8 summit in Birmingham.

Mr Cook, who has been a vocal critic of what he has called a "corrupt" regime, said on Tuesday there clearly could be no free and fair choice for Nigerians under such conditions.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, set up after Nigeria was suspended from the organisation for human rights abuses in 1993, is to meet in July, but with member countries such as Ghana and Zimbabwe unwilling to challenge the West African giant, its discussions are certain to be difficult.

"It's hard to pull these people together because their national interests always take precedence," a diplomat said yesterday. "Their attitude to

Nigeria is just like the United Nations' attitude to Iraq. Its bloody depressing."

Mr Cook, who issued the government's first human rights report on Tuesday and who will advertise the achievements of his first year in office in a speech tonight, is facing pressure for tougher action.

"This is an acid test for the UK's ethical foreign policy," Frances D'Souza of the anti-censorship group Article 19 said. "Britain... has openly acknowledged that the Nigerian military regime's democratic transition is a sham. There is no longer any excuse for inaction."

The Commonwealth agreed at last October's Edinburgh summit to impose sanctions already implemented by Britain and its partners if democracy had not been restored by October. Gen Abacha's sole candidacy makes clear that will not happen.

The sanctions include a visa ban for senior officials, the cessation of military training and a bar on sporting links.

In any case, most experts believe these steps will have little more than nuisance value, and that nothing short of an oil embargo — unimaginable because of the vast financial interests involved — is likely to have any effect on the regime.

Gen Abacha has not yet said he will contest the poll, but a huge campaign on his behalf has left little doubt that he hopes to move from military to civilian rule as most West African rulers have done. More than 7,000 dissidents have been jailed since he seized power in 1993.

In a gesture to pluralist politics, the government last year authorised the creation of five parties chosen for their support of the military. All were given \$250,000 (about \$150,000) and told to nominate Gen Abacha for the presidency. All complied.

The UN special representative to the volatile Central African Republic said this week that parliamentary elections should be held on time.

Oyejemi Adeniji said he expected rival ethnic, military and political factions to keep to timetable of August or September for the polls.

Malaysia's food crisis



Rhine River boys collect water from a well in a dry river bed in Matungung, in Malaysia's eastern state of Sabah on Borneo island, where severe drought and forest fires have hit crops, depriving villagers of their staple diet of hill rice. PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID LOH

UN expresses concern at flawed genocide trials

Public executions planned in Rwanda

Victoria Brittain

THIRTY-THREE people found guilty of genocide will be publicly executed in Rwanda tomorrow, four years after about 1 million people died in killings organised by the previous government of Hutu extremists.

National radio announced yesterday that the executions had been decided at a special cabinet meeting on Monday, when appeals for amnesty were turned down by President Pasteur Bizimungu.

The executions will be carried out at five locations where some of the worst massacres occurred. They are the football stadium in Kigali, Nyamata in Kigali province, Muramba in north-eastern Umuruta, Gikongoro in the south and Cyasemakamba in the south-east.

Survivors of the genocide were quick to respond to the news. "We welcome these punishments because they will definitely do away with the culture of impunity that

has damaged our country," a group called the Association of Peace Volunteers said.

Regional leaders, such as President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, have also called for exemplary punishments.

But José Luis Herrero, a spokesman for the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights in Rwanda, said in addition to opposing the death penalty on principle, his agency was protesting at the specific executions.

"The UNHCR felt the trials of the 33 were not sufficiently comprehensive to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt."

"Taking into account the way the trials developed in Rwanda, there is no such certainty," he said.

A government official in Rwanda said: "No one is happy about it, but it is the only way to send a message that people must pay for the crime of genocide... It is a necessary evil."

A foreign aid worker said that holding the executions in public would prevent rumours that the prisoners

had been tortured or killed brutally in secret.

About 150,000 people are in Rwanda's prisons accused of genocide — about a tenth of those who took part in the mass killings, according to the deputy justice minister, Gerald Gahima.

One hundred have so far been condemned to death and 15 have been acquitted in trials which have proceeded slowly because of the destruction of the judicial system in the genocide.

The government offered amnesty to prisoners willing to confess and apologise for their part in the genocide, but only a handful of people have taken up the offer.

No verdicts have yet been handed down by the United Nations international tribunal on Rwanda, sitting in Arusha, Tanzania. It has begun trials of some senior and local leaders of the genocide. The tribunal's maximum sentence is life imprisonment.

Killings by Hutu extremists continue to terrorise parts of north-western Rwanda.

Britain under fire on arms

Richard Norton-Taylor

BRITAIN and its European Union partners are today urged by a leading aid agency to take steps to control exports of small arms, a neglected feature of the weapons trade despite being responsible for 90 per cent of the casualties of war.

A report by Oxfam singles out Britain as a key player in the small-arms market, exporting to more than 100 countries in the past two years. Despite obsessive official secrecy, it has identified at least 120 British companies involved in the trade.

The call for tough controls coincides with threats by the United States to block the export to Britain of more than 14,000 handguns which it believes are to be re-exported to war zones or used in organised crime.

In the past year the Government has sanctioned at least 11 small-arms export licences to Kenya and at least 20 to Turkey, Oxfam says. It estimates that in 1995, 71 per cent of African countries importing small arms from Britain were suffering from political violence and other conflicts.

Licences for small arms cover a wide category of weapons including machine guns, mortars, grenades, shoulder-launched rockets and "chemical-irritant" weapons.

The nature of conflict has changed from set-piece international confrontations to a bewildering array of separatist and counter-insurgency wars, border disputes, ethnic and religious violence, coups d'état, national and counter-revolutionary operations, Oxfam says. It lists conflicts in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Mexico, East Timor, Sri Lanka, Rwanda and the Balkans.

Oxfam estimates that world trade in small arms was worth more than \$13 billion between 1990 and 1995, with Britain responsible for 25 per cent.

Claims of commercial confidentiality, an opaque export licensing system and mishandling of statistics by the Department of Trade and Industry make it difficult to uncover individual deals.

Questioned about the officially approved sale of Heckler and Koch sub-machine guns to the Kopassus special forces in Indonesia in 1995, Barbara Roche, the trade minister, told MPs that "no licence was shown as having been issued for export of these weapons".

But Oxfam discovered Lloyds Bank documents relating to exports of water cannon and small arms training systems for the Indonesian security department.

Paper shown the red card for Hitler gaffe

Andrew Higgins
in Hong Kong

HONG KONG's most popular newspaper yesterday apologised for using a picture of Adolf Hitler wearing a swastika armband to illustrate a tribute to Germany's World Cup football team.

The picture, published alongside an article predicting triumph for the German side and hailing Germany's "unyielding" national character, appeared on the eve of Yom Hashoah, a day of remembrance for the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

"The image of Hitler was purely part of the artistic design of the page and had no other meaning," said the Chinese-language Apple Daily in a brief statement in yesterday's sports section. "If it caused unhappiness for some people or groups, we apologise."

The picture outraged the former British colony's Jewish community and prompted protests from German diplomats. But instead of calming the furore, Apple Daily's explanation may only fan it further.

"They are completely missing the point. The problem is not that people are upset but that it is entirely wrong to use an image of a mass murderer to illustrate a soccer team," said Rabbi Yaakov Kermans of the Ohel Leah Synagogue. "I hope they will begin to recognise that what they have done is not simply print something politically incorrect or mildly offensive, but something that is tragically wrong. It is not just offensive, it is obscene."



'The Germanic race with the control of the ball', says the headline in Hong Kong's Apple Daily, which put a picture of Hitler with a report on German football. PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT YU

The article, part of a World Cup countdown series, said the German team embodied the qualities of a race that "never discusses defeat and struggles fiercely, so they are highly regarded."

The German consulate in Hong Kong said it was appalled by the newspaper's attempt to associate the leader of the Third Reich with the football team. A spokesman described it as tasteless and ignorant.

The Hong Kong media, known more for brash irreverence than for its knowledge of history, frequently causes offence. In 1995, the local television

station ATV used Hitler as the centrepiece of a drive to drum up business. It took out advertisements in local newspapers suggesting that if Hitler had advertised with ATV, the Third Reich would rule the world. A nightclub also used Hitler's image to sell itself.

"The problem here is not anti-Semitism. There is no graffiti, there are no attacks. The problem is woeful ignorance," said Rabbi Kermans. "Somewhere in the back of the mind people probably know that Hitler is associated with torture and murder, but what happened does not really register. They do

not care very much. That is the tragedy."

"There has been a big fuss over this in our own paper. What happened was an act of stupidity," said Francis LA, Apple Daily's deputy editor.

"When this special section came out the whole company, except for the sports desk, felt it was terribly wrong. What the graphic artists had in mind was to find a symbol to represent Germany, but unfortunately they don't have any political sense. How can you choose Hitler? He is a well-known mass murderer. Even the Germans want to forget him,"

Japan's PM acts to save economy, and himself

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo

JAPAN'S embattled prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, is expected to unveil his government's latest plan to revive the moribund economy tomorrow, in what could be the final throw of the dice for his leadership.

Falling approval ratings and increasingly vocal calls for Mr Hashimoto's resignation have prompted the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to consider dumping him in time for an upper house election in July.

The government's popularity has plunged because of a rapidly deteriorating economy and a series of scandals, starting in September with the appointment to the cabinet of a convicted bribe taker.

This year's revelations of bribe-taking by bureaucrats have forced the resignations of the governor of the bank of Japan, Yasuo Matsushita, and

former finance minister Hiroshi Mizusaka, one of the prime minister's key supporters.

The economy is the source of Mr Hashimoto's biggest problems. Consumer and business confidence has fallen sharply, there have been a record number of bankruptcies and negative growth has been forecast for

Hashimoto's party is considering dumping him in time for elections

the first time in more than 20 years.

Mr Hashimoto has been blamed for stifling consumer demand a year ago with a 2 per cent rise in the consumption tax and for trying to rein in government spending at a time when the economy needed a boost of public money.

In a recent front-page article calling for an "end to lawless prime ministers", Ja-

pan's largest-circulation newspaper, the Yomiuri Shimbun, which usually supports the government, wrote: "Politicians, who should be exercising leadership at this critical point, cannot bring themselves to go beyond stop-gap measures."

Tomorrow, Mr Hashimoto will reveal details of the latest of these measures, a 16 tril-

lion yen (\$72 billion) stimulus package.

The plan is a big gamble as the tax cuts and public works spending in the package will necessitate a U-turn on the government's pledge to reduce borrowing.

In the first public attack on Mr Hashimoto by a senior business leader, Seiji Tsutsumi, vice-president of the Japan Association of Corporate Executives, was reported

as saying: "Clearly, [the government's] economic policy is a failure."

"The market has presented [Mr Hashimoto] with so many votes of no confidence. He now needs to make a political response."

Mr Hashimoto has also come under fire from within his own party. At the end of last month, the former construction minister Shinzuke Kamel was quoted as saying: "The prime minister would be well advised to think about what he should do to take responsibility for the policy U-

With the cabinet's approval rating at a five-year low and an election for the house of councillors only three months away, LDP elders are said to be considering whether the prime minister is a liability.

So far, doubts about the ability of leading contenders to manage the economy any better than Mr Hashimoto have enabled him to cling on to power.

Fire destroys famed monastery

Barbara Crossette

ONE of the oldest and best known shrines in the Himalayan Buddhist realm outside Tibet, the Taktsang monastery in Bhutan, has been destroyed by fire, according to Bhutanese officials.

Kinley Dorji, the editor of Kunsel, Bhutan's only newspaper, said by telephone from Thimphu, capital of the Himalayan kingdom, that he saw the ruins on Tuesday and the wooden monastery was "totally gone".

An overturned butter lamp may have started the blaze. Mr Dorji said that some local people tried to scale the mountainside with buckets of water but were too late. A caretaker, the only monk in residence when the fire broke out on Sunday, was missing.

The monastery and temple, built on the face of a 2,500-ft cliff towering above the road from Paro in Bhutan to the

Tibetan border near Mount Chomolhari, had existed in some form since the ninth century, Bhutanese say.

"It was one of our most sacred monasteries," Tashi Tsering, a Bhutanese diplomat at the kingdom's United Nations mission, said.

Padmasambhava, a Buddhist saint known in the Himalayas as Guru Rinpoche, is said to have landed at the site on a flying tiger to bring Buddhism to Tibet, from India. Hence the monastery's name, "tiger's lair".

The monastery-temple was full of sacred silk hangings, statues and holy relics collected over centuries. It also had an outstanding collection of paintings from early Buddhist history.

Most non-Buddhist foreigners were barred from the inner shrine, but the mountainside was a place of pilgrimage for thousands and the first site tourists asked to see. — New York Times.



Before it burned down this week, Bhutan's Taktsang monastery marked the site where legend holds that Guru Rinpoche landed on a flying tiger to bring Buddhism to the Himalayas. PHOTOGRAPH BY SHERWIN CRABTREE

seeks to buy Russian. U.S. 'Hot air' market for take

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US seeks to buy Russian, Ukraine pollution quotas 'Hot air' market is set for take-off

James Mack in Moscow

WITHOUT waiting for the rest of the world, the United States, Russia and Ukraine are pressing ahead with talks on starting trade in a new international commodity so intangible as to sound like a byword for fraud: non-existent hot air.

If their plans are realised, the US — the world's biggest polluter, which spews more than five tons of pure carbon into the air for each of its 260 million inhabitants each year — will be able to go on doing so. It will "buy" surplus rights to pollute from the collapsed economies of the former Soviet Union.

Carbon trading, as the scheme is known, was accepted in principle at the Kyoto climate conference last December. But no steps to set it up were to have been taken until a further meeting in Buenos Aires in November.

Yet the Russian and Ukrainian governments have said they want to go ahead with carbon trading and are discussing with Washington how to implement the scheme.

Carbon trading is based on each country having a quota for the yearly amount of carbon dioxide it is allowed to release into the atmosphere.

Because many of Russia's and Ukraine's smokiest old

factories have shut down or are working at reduced capacity, the two countries now emit far less pollution than their quota allows. The US and other developed countries want to buy the rights to the difference — the carbon dioxide Russia and Ukraine are allowed to emit, but do not use, as credits against their own emissions.

Vladimir Berdin, a Russian, said: "They will emit CO2 that wouldn't have gone into the atmosphere."

climate expert involved in talks with US officials, denied reports from Kyoto that a "Carbon Club" had been formed linking Russia with the US, Canada and Japan.

"There's no such thing as a club as such. But we are carrying on talks, yes," he said. Mr Berdin said he would oppose a carbon-trading scheme unless the money Russia received was used to decrease his country's actual air pollution, either by planting new forests or by modernising factories and power plants.

But there are fears that the prospects of money for nothing may prompt Russia's treasury

and struggling industrialists to demand that they benefit from sale of pollution rights which are rightly theirs.

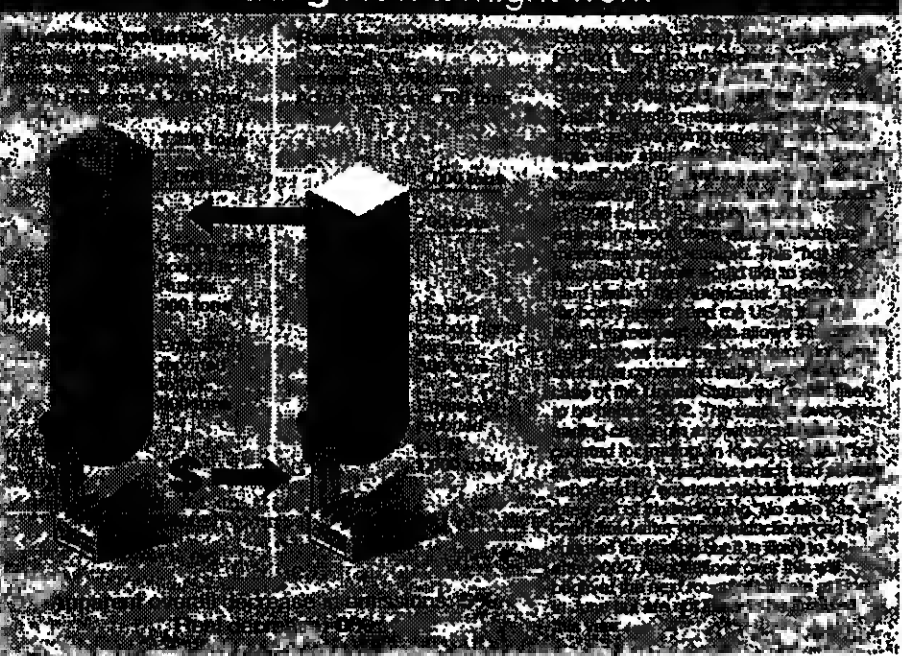
The weekly Moscow News reported that a group of fence plant directors was trying to steer income from carbon trading towards themselves in order to pay their workers' back wages and convert to civilian production. According to the Kyoto agreement, international audits of each country's performance on reducing carbon emissions will not take place until 2008.

Environmentalists are concerned that developed countries are trying to start banking ex-Soviet carbon credits before then for redemption in a decade's time.

"The details haven't been worked out and there's some confusion among the parties as to whether, if they start carbon trading now, they can bank these emissions for the first budget period," Stephanie Tumore, a climate specialist with Greenpeace, said.

"There seems to be a cartel forming of the US, Japan and Canada to buy up Russia's hot air. It means they're going to emit carbon dioxide that wouldn't otherwise have gone into the atmosphere. It does seem extraordinarily premature when no guidelines have been set and no trading rules have been put in place."

Carbon trading How it might work



French policemen try to remove prison officers blocking the jail in Caen yesterday during a week of protests by the prison workers' union, which wants the government to allocate funds to employ more guards

Euro splits French right

Paul Webster in Paris

GAULLIST MPs refused to approve the introduction of the euro currency yesterday, less than a week after the French president, Jacques Chirac, endorsed European Monetary Union in his strongest-ever commitment to Europe.

During a parliamentary debate that widened the split in the conservative opposition, Socialists had to ally with the rightwing Union for French Democracy (UDF) to outmanoeuvre an alliance between Euro-sceptics on left and right.

While Gaullists said they had ignored Mr Chirac's calls to back EMU to attack the economic policies of Lionel Jospin's Socialist-led government, Socialists interpreted the manoeuvre as an assault on the president's authority.

"Every time the RPR leader, Philippe Séguin, claims to be attacking Jospin, he only hits Chirac," the Socialist first secretary, François Hollande, said. "It is all very clear in the RPR. They support Chirac, but vote against his wishes."

Mr Séguin, who led the anti-Maastricht lobby during the 1992 referendum, took up the party line that Gaullists supported the euro but opposed Socialist economic policies. Government members said he had confirmed his role as the leading rightwing critic of the presidency.

A fortnight ago, the Gaullist-RPR movement said it would vote for the euro, and then announced it would vote against it. A decision to abstain and call for a censure motion on Mr Jospin's economic policies avoided revealing how seriously the party was split between Mr Chirac and Mr Séguin, after several MPs said they would not toe the party line.

The Communist Party secretary, Robert Hue, led his MPs into voting against the euro, claiming it would benefit only financiers and create more unemployment. He was backed by the Citizens' Movement, led by the interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement.

But Socialists and UDF members, led by former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, rallied around the prime minister's claims that the single currency would strengthen moves for European policies on social issues. Even if the parliamentary vote had gone against the government, it would not have stopped France entering EMU in January, because a decision has been approved at inter-governmental level. But the results will be scrutinised before a joint national assembly-congress later this year to approve the Amsterdam treaty. Analysts say that even if the Gaullists, Communists and others maintain their opposition, they are at least 60 votes short of the number needed to block ratification.

Modern highwaymen take a toll

John Henley on the good life enjoyed by some French cops who became robbers

MORE than 100 car radios, 400 cases of wine, half a dozen mountain bikes, countless cartons of cigarettes, three prize piglets and an awful lot of strawberries — while it lasted, it was a pretty good living for the cop-turned-robbers of the A9 autoroute.

"It wasn't really, like, stealing, you know," protested Christophe Bezbe, aged 26 and now working as a security guard. "People wanted to give us these things, they handed them over just like that. We didn't even have to ask them, they were so eager to avoid a fine."

Like 23 other former motorway patrolmen in court in the southern French town of Perpignan this week, Mr Bezbe faces corruption charges for allegedly extorting some £100,000 — plus an unknown quantity of goods — from speeding motorists and the drivers of overloaded lorries near the French-Spanish border.

Between 1993 and 1996, the court heard, the gendarmes systematically took anything and everything that could be used, sold or traded — crates of shellfish, sacks of cement, fruits, vegetables, even livestock — in return for turning a blind eye to traffic offences.

The operation, uncovered after an anonymous letter to police headquarters, was allegedly co-ordinated among several different teams from Orange to Perpignan. Patrolmen in on the scam would broadcast the going rate for different offences to each other over their radios.

"It depended what we knew could be sold, or what one of us needed," one policeman told the court.

"One day it would be strawberries, another day peaches." Two senior policemen had loyalty cards from a bureau de change in the border town of Perpignan which offered them preferential exchange rates.

The gang even issued special patrolmen's badges to drivers who had already paid and were anxious to avoid being caught again further down the motorway. "They were a kind of laissez-passer," said one patrolman, Ludovic Champagne. "They cost us about £2 each from the police stores, and we sold them for £10."

The three pigs, explained one of the accused, fell off the back of a Dutch lorry. "We ate one of them for dinner, and eventually sold the other two to a middleman. But we had nothing to feed them with, so we had to take a few sacks of corn from another truck a few days later," he said.

Some of the patrolmen were more discriminating. "I for one wasn't really interested in vegetables," protested David Martin. "You have to cook them and, as a 20-year-old bachelor, I didn't know much about that." Instead, Mr Martin admitted to a liking for strawberries, and for cash — about £3,000 in all, he thought.

One unit specialised in liberating the contents of stolen cars. "We would stop anything that showed signs of being stolen, impound it and take what we wanted," said Mr Bezbe. "It was usually car radios, but also alcohol and sometimes mountain bikes." One patrolman admitted to taking the wheels from a car reported stolen "because my tyres were worn out".

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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

THE campaign to succeed Tim Allan as Alastair Campbell's number two proceeds. After picking the brains of Charles Whelan and Oofy Wegg-Prosser (in an impressive instance of lateral thinking, Oofy advised sending a letter to Downing Street, "with your CV attached"), the job is as good as in the bag. My first priority will be coaching Mr Tony Blair in football, first in time for the World Cup. His recent form is worrying. Many thanks to the reader who sent in an item from the Mirror in January about an interview he gave to a local radio station in Newcastle, whose team he claims to support. Having failed to remember his first match, and claimed to have sat regularly in an area that was terracing at the time, Mr Tony was asked who his favourite Newcastle player might have been. "Jackie Milburn," he replied. But Jackie stopped playing for the Magpies when Mr T was four years old. What a precocious little fellow he must have been.

In his column yesterday, Francis Wheen noted that Madsen Pirie, president of the Adam Smith Institute, has taken up roller-blading in a bold bid to be part of Cool Britannia. In fact, it goes deeper than that. Guardian cartoonist Martin Rowson reports meeting him outside Politico's bookshop in Victoria. "Is that a tight sabre?" asked Ogi Wan Pirie, staring enviously at a Star Wars toy Martin had just bought for his children. "Can I have a go?"

M ASS murderer Dennis Nilsen takes umbrage at an article in gay magazine *Boyz* entitled *What Your Favourite Serial Killer Says About You*. This suggests that those who prefer Nilsen are pseudos who think "wearing glasses makes you look really clever." You crave company for your bedsit but inevitably go home alone. In a letter to editor Simon Gage, Mr Nilsen points out, among other errors, that his name was misspelled; he wears glasses because of shortsightedness, not as an affectation; none of his friends wears them; and he was not, as also alleged, a cannibal. "Your seasonal horror special is a passing phase for you and your readers," he concludes. "How sick is that?"

FOR research for our forthcoming biography of Paul Johnson to be published on November 2 (my sane and rational friend's 70th birthday) — a colleague and I are conducting many interviews and sifting through countless documents. Among these are newspaper cuttings, and my eye was recently caught by a 1983 Sunday Times interview by Susan Crawford. "The friend of a lot of very clever people have a cloth ear as far as irony is concerned," said the mischievous old soul, who once wrote to the paper to deny our friendship. "They take my jokes literally."

NEWS of the separated polar icecap concentrates the mind on the perils of global warming — a deeply worrying issue, and one ill suited by the tone of glib facetiousness that generally informs this column. With this in mind, my colleague Simon Bowers yesterday decided to ring the Icelandic Embassy to voice our concern to a grateful Petrina, who looks after cultural affairs. But is it correct, Simon asked, that these climatic changes have forced the Icelandic government to contemplate changing the country's name, possibly to Sinsdeland? "Not to my knowledge, no," replied Petrina. "We love the name Iceland too much."



...NEITHER LEFT...



...NOR RIGHT...



...THERE IS A THIRD WAY.



It looks as if we're going to get a comedian as mayor of London

Ian Aitken



PERHAPS you haven't noticed yet, but an election campaign is in full swing. Yes, really, right now, this very minute. Indeed, if you live in London, there are two campaigns going on. One is for the borough councils, and the other is a referendum on whether the capital should have an elected mayor and a separately elected assembly.

The smart betting is that there will be a low turnout outside London — local election polling has always been low, and has fallen even lower since Margaret Thatcher emasculated local government. But the professionals hope that more Londoners will do their civic duty, drawn out by the glitzy prospect of getting a shiny new mayor.

Personally, I wouldn't count on it. In spite of a glamorous launch beside the Thames, with none other than Himself in charge, the Yes campaign is being taken very much in the stride. And the explanation is simple: there is nothing which could seriously be described as a No campaign.

True, a small posse of stockbroker-belt Tories in leathery suits have created something which passes for a campaign organisation. But even they aren't calling it anything so negative as a No campaign. And with a war chest estimated at around £10,000, their impact will be minimal. Meanwhile, Mr Blair's Yes Men (no offence meant) are allegedly spending £1.5 million on pushing an open door.

This is a pity, because I believe there really is a case for a No vote. It is not, I hasten to add, remotely like the case being made by those Kentish rebels, who argue that Greater London is a conglomeration of separate communities and shouldn't be treated as if it were a single

entity. Translated, this means Labour's inner-city strongholds shouldn't be allowed to monkey with the Tory suburbs — precisely why Mrs Thatcher did away with the GLC in the first place.

No, my case for a No vote is quite different. I have: no quarrel with the idea of an elected assembly for Greater London — indeed, I would have favoured a simple re-creation of the old GLC, especially if it included taking County Hall back into municipal ownership. Nor do I object to an overall figurehead to speak up for us. What I don't like is the idea of a mayor who is to be directly elected in a separate ballot from the 25 members of the proposed assembly.

I offer two reasons for this objection. First, the constitutional issue. What happens when — as it assuredly will — the elected mayor seeks to pursue different policies from those of the majority party in the assembly? Will London experience the same paralysis which grips America whenever the White House and Capitol Hill are held by different parties? Bitter experience teaches us that this is a sure-fire formula for deadlock.

BUT the second issue is equally serious. Seven million people will be invited to choose the new mayor — by far the biggest electorate ever to vote for anything, let alone for a single individual, in the entire history of this country. Plainly, this is tailor-made for some flamboyant populist, as both Jeffrey Archer and Ken Livingstone spotted as soon as the idea surfaced. Yet the very prospect of these two comedians fighting it out as the official Tory and Labour candidates has caused panic at the headquarters of both

parties. So much so, indeed, that the wits at Westminster joke that the biggest organisations involved in the referendum are known respectively as ABBA (Anybody But Archer) and STORK (Stop Red Ken). But although they laugh about it, fear of these two has stimulated some old-fashioned Tammany Hall dirty tricks. They do not stop short of rigging the rules.

Not surprisingly, Labour is well ahead in this enterprise: for if there is one Old Labour attribute which New Labour

has not jettisoned it is how to cook the rule book. The old right used to do it to the old left, then the old left did it to the old right. Now it is New Labour's turn, and they have already shown real talent with their scheme to dish the awkward squad in the Euro-parliamentary elections. This they are doing by rigging the rules of "proportional representation". After that, dishing Red Ken must seem like child's play.

The party's finest brains have been devoted to constructing a mechanism for choosing Labour's official mayoral candidate which can be guaranteed to keep Livingstone out. The latest plan — handing the final choice to

the National Executive Committee, with its built-in Blair majority — looks like a winner.

To complain about this would be naive, and especially coming from someone like me who isn't so much Old Labour as Antediluvian Labour. But what is surprising about it is that none of Blair's babes saw the problem coming. The only conclusion one can reach — an unflattering one — is that the whole project wasn't thought through in advance. It no doubt looked like a splendid vote-catching wheeze when the 1997 manifesto was being drawn up. Like — dare one say it? — the Millennium Dome.

But my complaint is that we Londoners are not being given a real choice. There should have been two questions, one about an elected assembly and the other about a separately elected mayor. That would have made it possible to vote yes to the first but no to the second, thus maintaining the sound British parliamentary principle that mayors, like prime ministers, should spring from an elected assembly and depart when they can't command a majority there.

So will I vote No? Probably not, because we badly need that elected assembly. And while I draw the line at a man whose life story is even more ludicrous than his novels, it would be a splendid joke to get Red Ken back. But in an era when a TV news reader looks like becoming one of Her Majesty's ambassadors, it seems much more likely that we will get some lout from Essex.

Or how about Hezza? Like the Dome, it was mostly his idea, you know.

Hugo Young is away

I believe there really is a case for a 'No' vote in the May referendum

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Bomb-grade cowardice

George Monbiot



TONY BLAIR and Bill Clinton are absolutely right: there is a real and pressing danger that weapons-grade nuclear material will get into the wrong hands. Indeed, as I write, a dangerous and mendacious organisation, which is alleged to have killed people already and could kill many more, is about to get its hands on a consignment of bomb-grade uranium. The delivery will enhance its ability to terrorise the local population and hold its government to ransom. Having extracted hundreds of millions of pounds already, it will use the new consignment to demand many millions more from the hard-pressed natives of the island state it intimidates. I'm talking, of course, about the truculent, unruly faction, based in a fortified stronghold in a remote part of the world, known as the UK Atomic Energy Authority.

There's no question that the world has a problem. Huge quantities of bomb-grade waste are languishing, poorly guarded, in research laboratories all over the former Soviet Union. The five kilos of enriched uranium sitting in a physics lab in Tbilisi, Georgia, was simply crying out to be commandeered by one of the state's guerrilla armies and spirited away over an invisible border.

There's also little doubt that responsible global governance involves doing something to sort this mess out. As Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, took such pains to point out on Radio 4 yesterday, the British Government should help the United States to prevent the proliferation of bomb-grade nuclear material.

SO why the secrecy over our starring role as global policeman? Why did British people hear nothing about the Government's plans to fly the uranium to the Atomic Energy Authority's plant at Dounreay on the north coast of Scotland, until the news was leaked to the New York Times? It wouldn't have compromised state secrets to have consulted the British people about the principle of the deal, before the uranium arrived.

You don't have to look far to see why the Government might have been so untypically modest about its latest contribution to world peace. Dounreay is the most dangerous nuclear plant in Britain; possibly the most dangerous nuclear plant on earth, outside the former Eastern Bloc. Last year, it was

forced to reveal the existence of a shaft above the crumbling coastal cliffs, into which it had been dumping uranium, plutonium and a number of potentially explosive materials. The shaft had erupted once and could erupt again at any time. The revelation, the AEA claimed, marked a new culture of openness on its part: there would be no more cover-ups. Just two months later, a second hole was discovered at Dounreay, into which the plant is still dumping unsealed nuclear waste, despite the express instructions of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate that it had had enough. From Tuesday, Dounreay was to stop importing foreign nuclear fuel for at least two years, pending the outcome of a major safety review. One can't help suspecting that the United States government was not the only powerful agency Tony Blair was assisting by letting the uranium come to Britain.

By allowing, even encouraging, Dounreay to break the new embargo within days of its announcement, he may have saved the plant from the closure it so richly deserves. For Dounreay was established to do precisely what Britain's intervention in Georgia is intended to prevent. Dounreay extracts (or, extracted, until its decrepit reprocessing plant was closed 18 months ago), weapons-grade uranium and plutonium from nuclear waste.

The reprocessing centre will now reopen in order to upgrade a consignment removed, we are told, to reduce the global circulation of weapons grade material. Once reprocessed, it will almost certainly be sold abroad, probably to build another reactor, identical to the one which has caused so much panic in Georgia.

If Donald Dewar and his administration were truly intent upon honouring their international commitments, they would be making plans to mix the Georgian uranium with high level waste, rendering it permanently useless to bomb-makers, and seal it in glass for permanent storage.

They would be persuading the International Atomic Energy Agency to stop helping to build new reactors in impoverished countries, and start helping those countries to clean up their existing mess.

But this decision has nothing to do with good global governance, and nothing to do with non-proliferation. It has everything to do with a cowardly government's insatiable desire to please the powerful, while generating and distributing the most dangerous materials on earth.

I wonder who, if any, of my contemporaries will contact the Brothers newly-installed help line. That they have belatedly turned penitent still astonishes me. They were so steady in enforcing their codes. Even their surreptitious thrill-seeking was cloaked in pedagogic duty.

At St Mary's, one of their great devotions was rote learning of the catechism. It started with the biggest of questions: "Why did God make me?" The answer, burnt into my brain, was: "To know him, love him, and serve him in this world, and to be happy with him forever in the next." If you needed further guidance, Bro Brickley would make sure Excalibur taught you the full warmth of God's love.

Steve Boulton is editor of *World in Action*

He ordered me to remove my shorts, and placed his hand on my bare backside

No brother to me

Steve Boulton

I CAN still see him coming at me now, a black-clad threshing machine, strangely convinced that a 70 per cent test result was simple justification for brief but brutal punishment. Brother Brickley was a legend, the Irish Christian Brothers' forerunner to mad Father Jack in the Channel 4 comedy, *Father Ted*. While Jack flails at a world which won't provide enough drink, Brickley failed at his pupils to bang Latin into them.

Two blows — this minimum punishment — from his leather strap could render your hands incapable of writing for the rest of a lesson. Brickley, the most slap-happy of his peers, even had a name for his weapon: Excalibur. He wore it in the pocket of his

black cassock as a Western gunslinger would carry his six-shooter.

I recall how Brickley, one Saturday, arbitrarily raised the pass mark to 8 on 10, snaring many boys who would otherwise have passed. He and Excalibur then set about most of the class. The most surprising thing was that I escaped his wrath; the last for beating (thwarted by an unusually high pass mark). He had previously claimed other victims, most famously John Birt, now the BBC's director-general. A few years later, the press descended on a nearby school when a teacher leaked the punishment book recording hundreds of beatings in a year. Most people thought this excessive. At St Mary's College, Brickley alone was capable of hammering hundreds of pupils and in much less than a term. None of us

thought to call the press. In Liverpool in the 1960s, it was what the Brothers were known for.

Now they're known for something else. In Ireland, England and elsewhere, the Christian Brothers are now issuing public apologies for much darker sins, and offering help to those who were sexually abused by members of their order.

IN Crosby, sexual abuse was a sad and furtive business. I was targeted by another senior Brother and so was a friend. The teacher was the kind of Catholic clergyman who left a good impression upon the wider world. The school had a high reputation — it got academic results and discipline was not in doubt. When I was 12, I was taken by him from a PE lesson to the changing rooms. There was a reason

for this — I had been persistently late for school and had nearly suffered the numb hands of a beating from one of the Brothers.

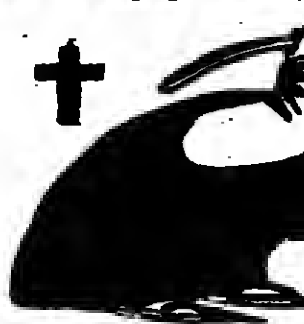
Now I had offended again. The Brother sat down on a bench in the deserted room and ordered me to remove my shorts and lay face down across his knee. I braced myself for the downstroke of the strap, but it didn't come. He placed his hand on my bare backside instead and left it there for what seemed like an age. Eventually, he told me to get up and dress. I had a bead a brave boy, and had shown my manliness by not flinching when punishment was expected, he said. He believed I had learnt my lesson. I was free to go.

The overwhelming emotion was of relief at escape. The humiliation of undressing and splaying yourself across a teacher's knee was

nothing compared to the pain of a beating. And at 12 I had no notion why a grown man might want to see and touch a naked boy.

It was only when sharing a drink with a friend years later that I discovered that he, too, had been pulled from a lesson. He was then told to undress and asked to "measure" himself by the same man to make sure he was "developing". Then I

knew. Looking back, I am mightily relieved that we were day boys, not the boarders or orphans who suffered gross abuse elsewhere. I suspect that I should also be grateful that the Brother's desires were so lightly gratified. To the best of my knowledge, abuse at St Mary's was confined to this desperate, furtive stuff... and to lashings of licensed violence.



Guardian

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CAP H

End of the

David McKie



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Maurice Stans

A suitcase full of dollars

THE startling fund-raising ability of Maurice Stans, who has died aged 90, underpinned Richard Nixon's notorious 1972 presidential election battle. Stans protested to the last that he was not involved in the crimes which marked the campaign. It was true, though universally forgotten, that a federal jury acquitted Stans of the perjury and conspiracy charges that followed the Watergate affair. Later, to avoid endless lawyers' fees, he pleaded guilty to five "non-willful violations" of campaign financing laws and was fined \$5,000.

But he could never escape his bizarre image as the treasurer of the President's re-election committee who repeatedly accepted suitcases full of untraceable dollar notes. One, from the fugitive financier Robert Vesco, contained \$200,000.

Stans once explained how he had managed to bring \$50 million into the committee's bank account — then the largest sum ever raised for a presidential election — by flattery. "No one ever gets offended by being asked for too much," he said.

But he took a calculatedly narrow view of his role as treasurer, arguing that his responsibility was simply to bring in the cash. He was able to convince the Washington jury that he had no idea the money was being spent on a sustained campaign of dirty tricks against Nixon's Democratic opponents.

But he sometimes had to work hard to preserve his innocence. During the Senate Watergate hearings one witness testified that he had questioned Stans about \$50,000 which seemed to be going to some doubtful purpose. Stans responded: "I don't want to know and you don't want to know."

During the White House

panic caused by the arrest of the seven burglars caught raiding the Democrat offices at the Watergate buildings in Washington DC, Herbert Kalmbach, the president's personal lawyer, rang Stans to say he needed \$50,000 urgently. Stans arrived with bundles of \$100 notes totalling \$75,000. He handed them to Kalmbach without once asking where they were going — in fact to the men charged with the break-in. It was extraordinary conduct for someone at the top of the accountancy profession.

Yet, in spite of the critical part he played on the committee, he was never one of Nixon's intimates, and the White House tapes later revealed that the President planned to



He remained astonishingly loyal to Nixon, although the White House tapes revealed that the President planned to make Stans scapegoat for the whole disaster.

Stans was the son of a Minnesota house painter who had pulled himself up by his bootstraps. His first job was as a shorthand typist for a company making sausage casings. On the \$30 a week it paid him he financed himself through accountancy night-classes at Northwestern University and joined a small firm of accountants. By the time he left the company in 1955 he was its sole owner. It had become the 10th largest accountancy in the country, and he was a millionaire.

He had also developed an avocational hobby, big game hunting, which brought him into contact with other rich Americans and thus with Republican politics. When President Eisenhower was re-elected in 1956 he chose Stans as his budget director, a nomination more than justified by the administration's rare achievement of a balanced budget.

The arrival of President Kennedy in 1960 took Stans back into business, as president of the First American Corporation in Los Angeles, but he returned to government in 1969 when President Nixon made him Commerce Secretary, although he subsequently ignored most of the advice Stans gave him.

In spite of his involvement in the Watergate scandal, Stans's later years passed comfortably. He held several lucrative directorships and acted as a consultant to 15 large corporations.

His first wife died in 1964. He is survived by his second wife and by two sons and a daughter.

Harold Jackson

Maurice Stans, accountant, born March 22, 1908; died April 14, 1998

Red Tyler

Carving out the sound of New Orleans

THE saxophonist, arranger and producer Alvin "Red" Tyler, who has died aged 72, was one of the craftsmen who carved the distinctive shape of New Orleans rhythm and blues out of the bedrock of early post-war blues and jazz. Like many of his fellow New Orleansians, he was first seduced by music when he heard a funeral parade band returning from the cemetery, the hymns of its outward journey replaced by exuberant, life-affirming jazz, what locals call the "second line".

"All these things passed my neighbourhood," he explained to the New Orleans historian John Broven. "I was quite familiar with the second line beat and all that. Then I got involved listening to some of the local bands around here, and I got hooked. I'd go to the dances and stand by the bandstand."

Tyler learned to play during United States Navy service, went to music school and in his early twenties was blowing tenor and baritone saxophone in trumpeter Dave Bartholomew's band. "This outfit was the band in the city as far as rhythm and blues was concerned," Tyler remembered. "We played all the big dances, quite a few of the shows."

Such was its reputation that when record companies came to the city to record local talent, Bartholomew's men were the pool from which they drew their backing musicians. In 1949 Tyler played on the first records of a plump young singer and pianist named Fats Domino, and his fruity baritone sax was heard on many 1950s hits by Little Richard, Shirley & Lee, Lloyd Price, Jimmy Clanton, Frankie Ford and other New Orleans R&B acts.

A small clique of Bartholomew alumni, including Tyler, drummer Earl Palmer, bassist Frank Fields, Lee Allen on tenor and Salvador Doucette or Ed Frank on piano, became known as the Studio Band, a session group so reliable and inventive that often producers did not bother to provide them with written arrangements. "We could create the song in the studio," Tyler told Broven. "It was trial and error. Sometimes we would start playing the riff and we would say 'that doesn't lay right' so come up with something else. This may have been why some of the things were so groovy — they were done how we felt — not how it was written."

IN THE early 1960s, when New Orleans R&B enjoyed regular commercial success, Tyler was associated with the producer Harold Battiste in setting up AMO Records. With the label's house band a new formation of the Studio Band known as the Inner Core, he was heard on hits of the era like Lee Dorsey's *Yo Yo* and Barbara George's *I Know*. He also had a producer's hand in 1967 in what has become one of the

Crescent City's anthems, Aaron Neville's *Tell it like it is*.

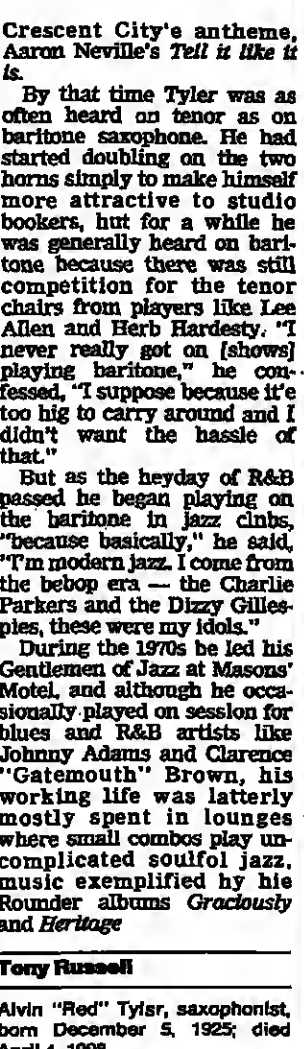
By that time Tyler was as often heard on tenor as on baritone saxophone. He had started doubling on the two horns simply to make himself more attractive to studio bookers, but for a while he was generally heard on baritone because there was still competition for the tenor chairs from players like Lee Allen and Herb Hardy. "I never really got on [shows] playing baritone," he confessed, "I suppose because it's too big to carry around and I didn't want the hassle of that."

But as the heyday of R&B passed he began playing on the baritone in jazz clubs. "Because basically," he said, "I'm modern jazz. I come from the bebop era — the Charlie Parkers and the Dizzy Gillespies, these were my idols."

During the 1970s he led his Gentlemen of Jazz at Mason's Motel, and although he occasionally played on sessions for blues and R&B artists like Johnny Adams and Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, his working life was latterly mostly spent in lounges where small combos play unaccompanied soulful jazz, music exemplified by his Rounder albums *Graciously* and *Heritage*.

Tony Russell

Alvin "Red" Tyler, saxophonist, born December 5, 1925; died April 4, 1998



Red Tyler... played on Fats Domino's first recordings

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID REDFERN

Birthdays

Shirley Temple Black, former child star and US ambassador, 70; Bill Cotton, broadcaster, 70; J P Donleavy, author, 72; Barry Douglas, pianist, 38; Air Marshall Sir Timothy Garden, director, Chatham House, 54; Victoria Glenndinning, biographer, 61; Dr Richard Laws, master, St Edmund's College, Cambridge, 72; Rowley Leigh, restaurateur, 48; Bernadette McAliskey, Irish civil rights campaigner, 51; Tony Miles, chess player, 43; Ronald Neame, film producer and director, 87; Prof George Steiner, linguistic philosopher and critic, 69.

A Country Diary

LOCH GARTEN: Normally visitors to this famous RSPB reserve are not allowed to see the ospreys and their nest until the birds have settled down and laid eggs. For a few days either side of Easter this year there were different arrangements so we went down to see what was happening. The early visitors would not be disappointed, someone had the great idea of positioning a video monitor in the entrance hut in the car park and it was with anticipation that we walked towards the small group of people. Then we stood and looked at the bulky nest that filled the

screen but we had missed one of the birds by seconds. The garden told us that the bird — he thought it was the female — had been hanging around the nest for a few days and, as she had been reluctant to leave, the male had been bringing her fish to eat. We waited for a few minutes and then someone in the forward hide panned the video camera down and there was the osprey sitting on a branch below the nest and her head and shoulders filled the screen. Later in the year this video monitor will be in the main hide, which for me is the most exciting part of the

set-up, as you can — via the camera — look down into the nest. Sometimes you can be lucky enough to see an adult bring fish in for the chicks. Sixty-eight chicks have been successfully reared from this nest since 1989 and almost two million people have visited the Osprey Centre. We left the temporary monitor, and back on the main road we discussed whether we could count the osprey as our second migrant of spring — the first had been a wheatear. Then the decision was made to set up a few miles away for us, as a few miles away over the car flew an osprey.

RAY COLLIER

Jackdaw

a language in which the sound of the words is raised to an importance equal to that of their meaning, and also equal to the importance of grammar and syntax.

In ordinary language, the sound of a word is useful almost exclusively in order to identify it and to distinguish it from other words. In poetry its importance is much greater. Poets think of how they want something to sound as much as they think of what they want to say and in fact it's often impossible to distinguish one from another.

The importance of being poetic. In the *New York Review of Books*.

Metal detector

IF watching your mate getting that navel-piercing was enough to make your skin crawl, turn over now. Steve Haworth is a Phoenix-based artist. "My medium is flesh," he claims, who has dragged suffering for style across yet another pain threshold. In an operation costing between \$300 and \$800 a go, he will take the idea of a poetic language seriously, it can be defined first as

tissue underneath and slide stainless steel objects (barbells, spheres and, for the forehead, horns or a popliteal) in the space between the objects are then taped into place so that the skin grows over them. Yes, it is painful — but according to Haworth, that's part of the appeal (which is greater than you might think: over the past five years he's carried out over 450 implants). Style victims he warned: this brand of cosmetic surgery could quite literally turn you into a freak magnet.

Found in The Face.

Science rules

RESPONSIBLE intellectual endeavour consists in maintaining a balance between two virtues: an open mind and critical scepticism. Scientists are the least dogmatic of enquirers: it is a premise of their work that their best current theories might have to be revised or abandoned in the light of new evidence. They therefore accept the obligation to make the strongest possible case for their theories, knowing that the scru-

tiny of their peers is relentless. But science is a minority sport. It requires skills which are not within everyone's reach, or to everyone's taste. It requires a facility in mathematics, and an imaginative ability to see the world to unexpected and often counter-intuitive ways. It also requires endless patience, and lack of dogmatism. The spirit of rational enquiry is not reserved to science. It is what gave rise to science in the first place. It remains an ideal, and often enough a fact, in other fields: in philosophy and history, in academia — and in law, business and administration in the practical sphere. Common sense, knowledge, and thoughtful assessment of the merits of a case — that is what matters to practical affairs. Science: it's a hard life according to Prospekt.

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail: jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax: 0171-713 4366; write: Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Hannah Pool

Letter

Edward Pearce writes: Although he enjoyed the joke of Howell The Rainmaker as much as anyone, Denis Howell (obituary April 30) would quickly grumble that a higher authority, by opening the skies, had frustrated an inspired piece of improvisation. On a train journey to the parched, worst-hit West of England which he was expected to inspect, he suddenly asked his civil servants: "What about an emergency pipeline above the ground?"

The idea would be to get spare piping out of the Army and commander the fast lane of a major westbound motor-

way. A young civil servant was put off at Swindon station and told to ring the Prime Minister, the Royal Engineers and the Ministry of Transport. The message was relayed to him in the far west that there was all the plastic piping in the world and no obstacle existed to his taking over the fast lane of the appropriate motorway. Then as he ruefully told it against himself, the drought was followed by an instant rainy season and the Minister had to settle for a mythical reputation rather than the inspired, practical one for which he had done the thinking.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN OUR report on Page 3, April 21, Sad days along Penny Lane, we were wrong to say that Linda McCartney's daughter, Stella, helped to set up the charity, Breakthrough Breast Cancer. But she is active, with other designers, in a campaign organised by Breakthrough, which aims to raise £1 million for breast cancer research at the centre set up by Breakthrough and the Institute of Cancer Research in partnership and due to open in the autumn. In the same report we said breast cancer deaths had fallen to just over 1,400 a year in the UK. This should have been 14,000, alas.

A CAPTION on Page 12, April 20, gave the impression that the picture to which it referred showed Croats paying their respects to victims of the Nazis at a monument outside Jasenovac. In fact, the monument commemorates victims of the Croatian Ustasha.

THE CITY of London of Police have asked us to correct sev-

eral points in a report headed, It's tough on City's streets, Page 21, April 8. We said that in 1997, violent crime rose... with much of that increase attributed to sexual assaults. In fact, the rise was due to operations against indecency in public places. While it is true that such offences are placed by the Home Office in the category of violent crime, they are not sexual "assaults" but sexual "offences", against statute rather than against the person. The article said that "reports of vehicle crime rose by more than 13 per cent — despite the implementation of systems..." However, it was because of new technology that the rise was reported, not despite it. We said that "home burglaries are down slightly at 404 cases". In fact, there were only 28 home burglaries. The figure we gave referred to all burglaries, home and other. This was a decrease over the previous year of 21.7 per cent. Finally, we said that "theft cases, including office break-ins, rose by 7.6 per cent". Theft, indeed, rose by 7.6 per cent. But break-ins are bur-

Brian Hackett

Designs on the landscape

BRIAN Hackett, who has died of cancer aged 86, was a key landscape architect in that postwar era of expansion and new towns. Partly inspired by a 1947 visit to Sweden, he championed an understanding of ecology as a basis for design. In 1967 his career culminated with a personal chair in landscape architecture at the University of Newcastle, which he held until 1977, when he became emeritus professor.

Born in Bideford, his family moved to Burton-on-Trent where he was educated at the grammar school. Exploration of the surrounding countryside provided the basis for a lifelong inspiration. In 1930s Birmingham he worked for an architectural firm and studied at the school of architecture. Later, employed in London, he enrolled at the Architectural Association's school of planning and research for national development.

After war service as a flight-lieutenant — while continuing to study — he lectured at what was then the School of Planning and Regional Development in London. There the educational regime comprised three-month courses by which architects and surveyors were to be converted into planners.

He enrolled in the Institute of Landscape Architects (ILA) during the war, was elected an associate in 1945, and a member of the ILA council nine years later. He was to be its president from 1967 to 1969, and from 1991 an honorary vice-president.

In 1947 the recently appointed professor of town planning, J S Allen, invited him to lecture at Durham University's King's College, as it then was, in Newcastle Upon Tyne — which later became that city's university. By then Hackett had visited the United States on a Fulbright Award where landscape architecture education was well established. In 1950 he initiated a one-year postgraduate diploma course, which by the late

1960s had become a two-year course and later a B Phil. At the end of the 1950s he spent two years at the University of Illinois. From 1965 he led a major interdisciplinary project studying the restoration of derelict colliery sites. At the same time he undertook the reclamation of hundreds of hectares of derelict land in Northumberland and Durham, which led to the successful restoration of thousands more. Another area of study was that of steep slopes in urban areas, notably the banks of the Tyne. It was largely for this work that he was awarded the Europa Prize for Landscape in 1972.

Public office included the



Hackett... land reclamation

North of England regional advisory committee on forestry, the national water planning committee, and the Northumbrian Historic Churches Trust. For many years he chaired the Northumberland and Newcastle Society.

Hackett was a keen flautist and, priding himself on his culinary skills, he delighted in entertaining. His first wife Frederica died shortly after his retirement, and he subsequently married Elisabeth Ratcliffe. He is survived by his second wife, three children and his grandchildren.

Mike Downing

Brian Hackett, landscape architect, born November 3, 1911; died March 22, 1998

Jean Moore

Quiet pioneer

"TO BEGIN with a cruel paradox: in spite of all the care and concern, the easiest thing to do in child abuse work is to lose the child's perspective — to miss what the experience means to an abused child."

In 1985 such a statement was a rarity. It appeared in *The ABC of Child Abuse Work* by Jean Moore, who has died aged 67. Written in a popular, accessible style, aimed at social workers and social work students, the ABC was one of the first texts to emphasise that perspective.

Jean was an unassuming pioneer. She was born in Streatham, London, her father an accountant and a 1930s Bethnal Green councillor — her mother a nurse. After the London School of Economics, she began her career in group work and then became a settlement worker. She began her work as a probation officer, developing imaginative, effective ways of communicating with children and young people — at the East End's Grenville Court. There too she met her solicitor husband, Peter.

In the early 1960s she became a senior tutor and lecturer with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The NSPCC then still had the image of "the cruelty man", thing to do in child abuse work is to lose the child's perspective — to miss what the experience means to an abused child."

After a spell with Hackney Council as training officer, she turned to freelance training and consultancy. In 1992 she published *The ABC of Child Protection*, which was more than a revision of her early book, more an acknowledgment of just how far child protection work had developed, in no small part due to her.

In the early 1980s I organised a conference on child abuse at which she spoke. Afterwards she said to me: "Sexual abuse is the coming thing. That's what you should organise a conference about. You'll see." Of course, she was right. Jean had her finger firmly on the pulse of development within her specialism, and the social work profession is the better for having numbered her among its own.

Terry Philpott

Jean Moore, social worker, born August 25, 1930; died March 27, 1998

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Terry Philpott

Jean Moore, social worker, born August 25, 1930; died March 27, 1998

In Memoriam

COMPTON, Derek, sportsman and gentleman. Born 20th May 1910 died 22nd April 1998. To place your remembrance telephone 0171 713 4667 or fax 0171 713 4128 between 9am and 5pm Mon-Fri.

Analysis

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Analysis Homework

Night school in the living room

Some parents and teachers complain about David Blunkett's prescriptive advice on the importance of homework. Education experts are divided, too, but the school-age generation has a lot of catching up to do. **Vivek Chaudhary** reports

YOU have to be pretty dedicated to watch three hours of TV a night. It's fine. But it isn't a lot to ask to do half an hour's homework as well," reflected David Blunkett, the Education Secretary. Schools were told this week that they would be expected to draw up policies on home study and parents told how much time their children should spend doing it each night. It all sounded reasonable enough — Mr Blunkett stressed that there was no compulsion on parents to adhere to the guidelines, and nearly all schools set homework anyway.

Yet there was strong reaction. To Blunkett's remarks, hard-pressed parents protested that paternalistic new Labour is getting too prescriptive on education, just as it has been on law and order. And some of the teaching unions have moaned and muttered about yet another encroachment on the time and good sense of their members who, they argue, are the best judges of the time and content of homework. The guidelines smacked of centralisation, protested one teacher's leader.

But set aside the weary protests, does the Education Minister have a point, are the guidelines realistic and reasonable, and what do experts here and in other countries say about the value of homework? Crucially, does more of

it help poor students and does extra study improve standards of basic literacy and numeracy?

The advice to parents of four and five year olds is that their children should spend 20 minutes mostly reading, being read to, and on other basic activities. Homework for age group nine to 11 should be at least 30 minutes; for 12 to 16s, between one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half hours.

While homework has always been an essential ingredient of school life, in reality, claim education specialists and the Government, it has slipped in importance in schools. The result, they claim, has been that children are falling behind their international peers in literacy and numeracy.

The Third International Maths and Science Study of nine-year olds (TIMSS) showed that England was 17th out of 26 states in the two subjects; Japan and Singapore headed the league.

One of the differences between the two top countries and England could be the time spent on out-of-school study, and the number of teachers that assign it. In England, for example, most 13 year-olds spend an average of one-and-a-half hours on homework, but that figure varies a lot from school to school. Those at grammar and independent are likely to spend longer than state school pupils. In Singapore, 13 year-olds spend 4.6 hours on average; in Japan the figure is 2.3 hours each night.

Mr Blunkett's department plans to set up 8,000 centres where pupils can pursue their after-hours studies, with supervision and support laid on. This will effectively be providing cramming — long established in the fee-paying sector — for state schools. Funds will come from the National Lottery.

Mr Blunkett says he is unashamed of adopting ideas from the independent sector. "We are always interested in what is working best, and trying to draw on it," he says.

PROFESSOR David Reynolds, who compiled a report for Ofsted on how Britain compares with other countries in out-of-school studying, and is a member of the Government's numeracy task force, claims that homework is good for pupils, parents and teachers.

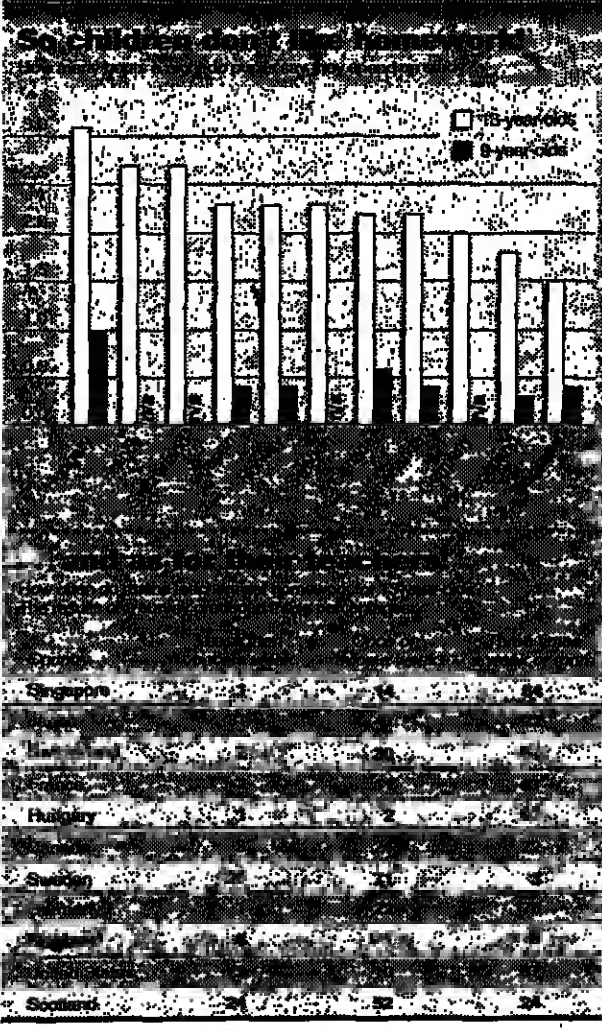
Mr Reynolds says: "Home study expands active learning and research has also shown that it leads to academic achievement. It involves the parents and makes them part of a relationship between pupil and school. It allows the parents to participate in the learning process of the child, and gives the slower pupils a chance to catch up with the rest of the class which enables the whole class to progress together."

There is, he says, another practical value in after-hours education: "... it helps to cut down on delinquency. If children are sitting at home doing



Full marks
Eighty-five daily homework regime

4-5 year-olds	20 minutes, with 10 devoted to reading
5-7 year-olds	30 minutes, including 20 minutes reading
7-9 year-olds	40 minutes, half of which should be reading
10-11 year-olds	50 minutes reading, and 20 minutes on other subjects



homework they are not out there on the streets."

What concerns many parents and teachers, however, is whether it is right to set tasks for children under seven. Add to this concern the Government's proposed literacy and numeracy hour for primary schools, and many very young pupils could find themselves overburdened.

Britain has the youngest school starting age of all European states, with many children now entering the system at four; via reception classes. Research has shown that formal learning at too early an age, particularly for boys, hampers them and hampers their academic progress, leading to Britain lagging behind its European counterparts. In most other European countries children do not enter nursery until aged six, and do not start formal learning until they are almost eight.

Dr Helen Penn of the Institute of Education in central London says: "Our children are being damaged by starting school too early and by being put through formal learning too soon. They need time to build up their skills and need to be able to play. We shouldn't even be discussing whether they should be doing homework or not. It's pretty frightening for a four or five-year-old to be in a big school and this is not the type of education that the Government should be promising."

While there is little doubt that older pupils need to study at home as part of their GCSEs, isn't there enough pressure on them already? Faced with school league tables, a competitive jobs market and costly entry into further and higher education, the last thing they probably need is Government homework guidelines.

Among cases of suicide by young people last year, it is believed that 13 killed themselves because of study and exam pressure (p. 10). Childline, the children's charity, claims

that almost 890,000 pupils called its hotline to say that they had worries over education and exams. "Fear of failure is so severe that some children try to take their lives," says Jane Moules, the charity's director.

According to Wendy Keys of the National Foundation for Educational Research, who compiled a comparative study of homework across the world, there needs to be more thought by teachers about home study programmes.

Ma Keys says: "Holland is top in Europe when it comes to maths ability among nine-year-olds, but they are assigned even less homework than English children. It's no use just assigning homework for the sake of it, it has to be carefully thought out and built around lessons in schools."

BUT what of pupils in Japan, Hong Kong and other Pacific Rim states which are always held up as the paragons of homework value? In Japan, where the youth suicide rate is almost three times greater than Britain's, truancy increased by more than 15 per cent last year. Much of this is attributed to the stresses on young lives.

In Hong Kong, where homework is given to children from the age of three, a recent survey by a local university found that incidents of violence to children had increased. The Baptist University concluded that more parents were losing their tempers with children sitting at home with their books in the evenings.

Researchers in Britain acknowledge that occasionally family tensions can increase when children are studying in a room where other activities are going on. But they argue that homework needs to be seen as a natural and expanding part of

family life if education standards are to rise.

Whatever the concerns, the Government's proposed study centres and guidelines to parents will go some way towards helping low-income parents in particular: many will have an opportunity for the first time, to work alongside their children with professional teaching support.

Part of what the Government wants to achieve can be seen in the work of the charity Education Extra, which has been running 12 pilot after-school study centres for the past year. In these children do lessons, often with their parents.

Richard Thompson of Education Extra says: "We believe that you need to have a wide definition of what homework is. Obviously there is a role for learning tables and reading, but there are many other study activities which can aid a child's progress."

With arguments over how much, how long and how effective homework can and should be, Mr Thompson believes that Britain has a lesson to learn from other countries.

He says: "Obviously we need to look at other countries but there are also many dangers about pushing children too hard and we should seek to avoid those."

Sources: (1) Third International Maths and Science Study 1997; (2) National Foundation for Educational Research 1996; (3) Childline Survey 1998. **Graphic Sources:** National Foundation for Educational Research. **Graphics:** Finbar Sheehy. **Research:** Matt Keating. **Vivek Chaudhary** is the Guardian's education correspondent.



Capital
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FinanceGuardian

Taylor gets itchy feet

Lisa Buckingham
and Julia Finch

MARTIN Taylor, the 59-year-old chief executive of Barclays Bank, is believed to have started putting out hints in the City that he is looking for a new challenge and may be ready to quit in a year's time.

Mr Taylor, 45, who has come under pressure from Barclays' investors after initiating takeover talks with NatWest and Standard Chartered and then being forced to withdraw, has been chief executive at the bank for four years.

The former chief executive of Courtauld Textiles, and a one-time Financial Times columnist, he is still remarkably young for the role of chief executive of a leading bank. He had been mentioned as a

future governor of the Bank of England, although Eddie George has just been reappointed for a five-year term.

One senior executive in the banking industry said Mr Taylor had discreetly let it be known he would be ready to go in about a year, when he felt he would have accomplished all he could at Barclays. Analysts believe Mr



Taylor... putting out hints

Taylor is attempting to line up an acquisition in mainland Europe, possibly Spain, now that his efforts to secure a deal with NatWest and Standard Chartered appear to have foundered.

Pulling off a good European deal would enable Mr Taylor to move to a new role at a high point in his career, they believe. A spokeswoman for

Barclays said there was no question of Mr Taylor wanting to leave — he has been a main board director for only five years.

"This is absolute rubbish," she said. "It sounds like someone's mischief making."

Mr Taylor was drafted in to Barclays after it performed spectacularly badly during the last recession. He succeeded Andrew Buxton, the last remaining member of the Barclays' founding families, who presided over the worst trading loss in British banking history. Relations between Mr Buxton, who stayed with the bank as chairman, and Mr Taylor are understood to be strained at times.

Although Mr Taylor is regarded as one of the most fearsome intellects in the City and is one of the top ranked business advisers to Tony Blair's government, he is not without his critics.

Dissenting voices could be heard about the U-turn he performed over the disposal of Barclays' investment banking business and the "open-architecture" process used to handle the sale, which ended with only one credible bid.

The price achieved looked unattractive compared with what NatWest managed to pull in for its battered investment banking business sold in secret at the same time.

Mr Taylor also attracted flak when he seemed to want to acquire something but appeared unsure about the potential targets. He first approached NatWest but was rebuffed, although his interest prompted Lloyds TSB to pledge that if Barclays launched such a bid it would launch a counterbid.

Mellon Bank rejects bid approach

JUST two weeks after the creation of the world's largest financial service company and America's largest bank, Citigroup, another financial giant may be in the works, following the Bank of New York's bid yesterday for Pennsylvania-based Mellon Bank, writes Laurie Laird.

The unsolicited offer follows the pair's repeated attempts to engineer a friendly merger — the latest of which foundered over the placement of top executives. Mellon has rejected the Bank of New York's latest \$24 billion proposal, but analysts say that the Bank of New York is likely to prevail — it is one of the few

banks ever to complete a hostile takeover — despite Pennsylvania laws that restrict companies to consider the financial interests of the corporation ahead of those of the shareholders.

The combined company would be one of the largest US mutual fund managers with some \$350 billion under management.

Schroder in quandary on catalogue bid

IAN KING reports on a nail-biting finish to Argos takeover struggle

JIM Cox, UK investment director at Schroder Asset Management, holds the fate of Argos in his hands as tomorrow's deadline looms in the £1.9 billion takeover bid from Great Universal Stores.

Schroder owns 15 per cent of the catalogue retailer, making Mr Cox by far the most powerful shareholder in the long-running battle. Mail-order giant GUS appears to have won the vote of funds owning about 30 per cent of the shares, led by investment giant Prudential. But about the same number of votes have swung behind Argos.

With most retail analysts advising shareholders to accept the 60p per share bid, many smaller shareholders may join the GUS camp. But Mr Cox's stake could be enough to win Argos its independence, if the view is that the offer is insufficient.

Mr Cox will announce the decision tomorrow afternoon. True to form, he will undoubtedly stress that it is not a one-man hand decision. "We regard ourselves as a team here and it will be a team which makes the decision (on whether to back GUS or Argos)." Even so, as the head of Schroder's £1.75 billion UK Enterprise Fund he will play a big part in the decision.

Mr Cox is an unusual presence in the City. Aged 51, he

has spent his 30-year career in the Square Mile with just two companies. After leaving Cambridge in 1969 with a natural science and economics degree, he joined Prudential, an economics forecaster and UK companies analyst for the main insurance fund. In 1987, he joined Schroder.

Married with three children, he is described as quiet and cerebral, with few interests outside work and his family, aside from football.

The UK Enterprise fund has performed admirably since its launch in December 1989, comfortably outstripping the FTSE-All Share Index. But it hit hard times last year. Although the fund increased in value by 16 per cent, it underperformed the All-Share Index by 3 per cent.

The highest holdings in the fund, at the end of last year, were Asda, which accounts for 5 per cent, Vodafone Group, and Slough Estates. There are also big holdings in Lasso, British Aerospace, Tesco, NatWest and Guardian Royal Exchange.

Mr Cox said the fund's underperformance was due to its overexposure to small and medium-sized companies, despite holdings in three companies — Clyde Petroleum, T&N and Redland — which were taken over during the year.

Schroder's vote in those three takeovers gives no clues as to how it will vote in the battle for Argos. During the hostile bid for Clyde, Schroder backed the incumbent management, while with Redland and T&N — hostile bids that later became agreed cash offers — Mr Cox accepted the cash.

Mutual admiration



A home for the Woolwich, but not as attractive for borrowers as before

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID SILLITOE

Homebuyers spurn the new banks

TERESA HUNTER on sweet revenge for the building societies

HOMEBUYERS turned their backs on banks in March for the second month running, as cheaper building society deals allowed the mutuals to swallow the lion's share of new mortgages and gain the upper hand in an increasingly critical home-loans war.

Last month, the banks, including former building societies such as the Halifax and Abbey National, who together once accounted for half the nation's mortgages, jointly lent \$454 million, their second poorest month for a year.

By contrast, building societies, which now represent just a quarter of mortgage institutions, attracted \$213 million of new loans. Last month societies lent \$227 million compared with the banks' \$271 million.

The Woolwich became the latest new bank to be lambasted for high mortgage rates and a haemorrhaging of savings customers at its annual general meeting yesterday.

One member asked: "Why have investors withdrawn \$200 million from savings accounts and not reinvested it?"

Another said: "You may have given us \$2,000 worth of free shares, but that money will soon mean nothing to anyone foolish enough not to switch their mortgage to other, cheaper lenders."

Attempts to defend the Woolwich's pricing policy were met with boos

were silenced with boos of "rubbish" and "nonsense", leaving chairman Sir Brian Jenkins to admit that the society attempted to be competitive "over time" and could not do that "for every customer every week" while generating value for shareholders.

This follows an acknowledgement earlier this week from the Halifax that its net lending last year fell from 19 per cent of the market to 6 per cent, and that it could take several years to rebuild.

With this pattern repeating itself to a greater or lesser extent throughout the former building society sector, banking analysts are beginning to conclude that these institutions may have "boxed themselves in" by their notions, and

are finding great difficulties plotting a path forward.

This comes at a time when ambitions for the holy grail of bancassurance, one-stop financial supermarkets, are being clipped.

One analyst said: "These organisations floated to diversify from their core savings and mortgage business, because they believed these were mature markets which would not deliver growing profits for the future."

"But they have found that customers do not necessarily want to buy these other financial products from them, and much of what looked like diversification, such as selling personal equity plans to existing investors, is merely moving money around."

The Halifax and Woolwich remain the least diversified, with 80 per cent of profits coming from savings and mortgages, and are hardest hit by the swing towards the mutuals.

Notebook

GUS deserves to win its fight



Edited by Alex Brummer

WHEN Lord David Wolfson of Great Universal Stores launched a hostile bid for an enfeebled Argos in February no one imagined that the catalogue retailer was capable of putting up such a strong defence. Argos was seen as crumbling in the face of the strong commercial arguments and cash coffers of Britain's premier mail-order group.

However, with the clock now ticking away towards tomorrow's voting deadline, the bid is too close to call.

GUS is engaged in a frenetic effort to convince those institutions and shareholders still sitting on the fence that its 60p per share offer, worth £1.9 billion, is the best deal they will ever have for Argos and that the shares will rapidly fall back by around £1 should it not succeed. It also points out that the decision made by the Prudential and Baillie Gifford to stick with the existing management may be a fallacious one.

Although chief executive Stuart Rose has shown himself a feisty fighter, he has no track record at Argos. Indeed, claims that sales are 11.8 per cent up in the first 12-15 weeks of the year are misleading, because the figures are not on a like-for-like basis.

Similarly, the elevation of Abbey National's Peter Birch to the chair may look reassuring, but in a long stretch on the Argos board he has made little impact. The reality is that the lead management is untested in the current heat of catalogue and mail-order shopping.

Moreover, the 50/50 joint venture with Littlewoods — GUS's main rival in UK mail order — is a less than ideal partnership for Argos, as has been pointed out here before.

It would give Littlewoods direct access to the healthy Argos customer base by adding its fashion products to the catalogue but would give Argos no access to Littlewoods customers. In addition, Argos could not use any data from the joint venture in its core high street business without Littlewoods approval. In some respects this defensive deal underlines the good sense of putting together GUS's home shopping experience, technology and delivery network with Argos in a wholesale way.

The biggest problem for GUS is convincing Schroder's fund managers, which hold 16 per cent of the Argos stock, that the 60p offer is the best that can be delivered. Schroder is in a dilemma. As financial advisers to Argos, it would be deeply embarrassed if the investment bank — Chinese walls notwithstanding — were to deliver the death blow to a client's independence. It would certainly

Hard Liffe

WHATEVER else it may lack Liffe is not short on hyperbole. Yesterday it was trumpeting proposals for substantial changes to its strategic focus, to its corporate governance and to its trading platforms. Profit is to be the watchword. As an earnest of intent costs are to be cut by \$44 million, with the budgeted headcount falling by 130 (including 60 redundancies).

Hard choices remain. Liffe has acknowledged the competitive challenge of electronic trading, but it will not abandon floor trading and has yet to make its mind up which electronic system to use. Which products will be traded via the electronic system has yet to be decided.

Its financially complicated ownership structure — six classes of shares carry trading rights and different voting rights — is up for review. Ownership and trading rights may be split, although the replacement structure will hardly be straightforward. Nor is it clear whether the planned move to Spitalfields will go ahead.

In response to competition from Frankfurt, Liffe is talking a good game but the real decisions have yet to be made.

Mutual merger

ONE of the more fascinating aspects of the prospective \$23.6 billion (£14.4 billion) takeover by the Bank of New York of Pennsylvania's Mellon Bank is that it would create a fund management behemoth. The combined company would have some \$360 billion of funds under management, including the well-regarded Dreyfus mutual funds.

This would seem eminently sensible at a time when, as David Hale of the Zurich group has noted, mutual fund holdings in the US are about 1996-1997. Of the director-general David Edmonds said costs had fallen by 30 per cent over two years.

News in brief

Boeing profit hit by 737 snags

THE profits of Boeing, the world's largest plane maker, crashed 91 per cent to \$50 million (\$30.5 million), mainly as a result of production problems with the new version of its best-selling 737 commercial jet.

The Governor of the Bank of Scotland has attacked computer software suppliers for selling products wrongly described as "year 2000 compliant". Sir Bruce Patullo refused to name the suppliers but said they had now taken remedial action.

Lloyd's new game
Former British tennis player David Lloyd is making a business comeback as chairman of a new chain of sports clubs. He heads New Generation Clubs, which was founded by

his son, and plans to spend £100 million in the next five years, opening three new clubs a year.

Carlton signs Duke
The television group Carlton signalled its intention to become a serious player in on-line services by recruiting a senior manager for its fledgling internet business. Carlton is quitting the magazine publisher EMAP to become managing director of Carlton Online. The operation will sell programmes and books, games and videos on the internet as well as advertising.

Cheaper phone bills
Britain has some of the lowest interconnection rates in the telecoms industry, the regulator said yesterday. Publishing BT's interconnection rates for 1996-1997, Ofcom director-general David Edmonds said costs had fallen by 30 per cent over two years.

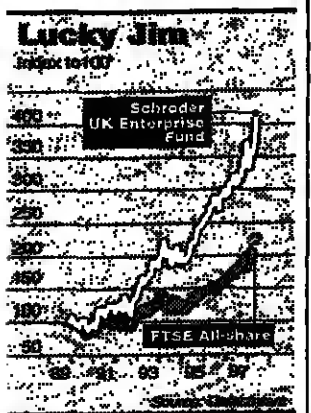
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Australia 2.51	Germany 2.0279	Malaysia 6.31	South Africa 2.81
Austria 20.59	Greece 508.42	Netherlands 0.6399	Spain 167.00
Belgium 80.32	Hong Kong 12.63	New Zealand 2.292	Sweden 12.58
Canada 2.34	India 66.48	Norway 12.15	Switzerland 2.62
Cyprus 0.8579	Ireland 1.1592	Portugal 297.45	Turkey 385.650
Denmark 11.21	Israel 6.29	Saudi Arabia 5.18	USA 1.8408
France 9.95	Italy 2.913		

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Jim Cox: man at the helm



RAC opens talks with five suitors

THE Royal Automobile Club has received five "serious" approaches to buy its motoring services operation and opens talks with potential bidders this week, writes Julia Finch.

Negotiations will start before RAC members have voted on whether to split the Full Mail club from the breakfast and driving school operations, which will then be sold off. But it is understood that the RAC's board believes its members will vote overwhelmingly in favour of the split, which promises to produce a huge windfall payout for members.

The board has written to

the 12,000 full members of the RAC's gentlemen's club in London's St James's — who legally own the motoring services organisation — to gauge opinion on selling off the business operations.

The club believes the motoring services business is worth \$450 million, which suggests members could receive one-off payments of \$35,000 each after expenses.

The identities of the potential bidders are closely guarded, but Cendant, the US company which has agreed to pay \$200 million for the UK's National Parking Corporation, is believed to be interested.

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Snooker

Rocket slow to step on gas

Clive Everton in Sheffield

RONNIE O'SULLIVAN, winner of four titles this season, is puzzled by his inconsistency even though he beat the Northern Ireland No.1 Joe Swail 10-6 yesterday to reach the last 16 of the Embassy World Championship at the Crucible Theatre.

The Rocket's superb opening, when he surged to 4-0 in 43 minutes on Tuesday night, gave way to patchy form yesterday. "The head wasn't there," he said. "The form I've been showing on the practice table has been poor and that was even worse."

Swail, winner of only three matches in the season's previous seven world-ranking events, made the highest break of the match, 94, but was never able to reduce his arrears to less than three frames. O'Sullivan's tally of two 70s, three 60s and five 50s was nothing special, but hinted at the scale of scoring of which he is capable.

Darren Morgan's appetite for the game was undiminished first by his mother's death midway through last season and then by his father's almost a year ago, but nevertheless he beat Northern Ireland's Jason Prince 10-8. "It was very hard to come here because my dad was with me last year," said the Welsh left-hander.

Trailing 5-4 overnight, Morgan went 7-5 up with fine winning of 60 and 70 separated by a black-ball win. From 7-6 he progressed to three up with four to play but dropped the next two frames before clinching a welcome fourth win of the season in the 18th.



Smooth sailing... Brunel Sunery, the Dutch yacht, leads the Whitbread fleet up Chesapeake Bay to Baltimore

Tactical triumph puts Dutch in clear water

Bob Fisher in Baltimore

IT was a bold and brave move just over 12 hours after the start which put Roy Helmer's Brunel Sunery into what seems an unassailable lead on the seventh leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race.

As the Dutch boat entered Chesapeake Bay she was 14 miles ahead. That increased

to 19 with 76 miles to go but soon reduced to 11.4 only three hours from the finish here.

Others are acknowledging the brilliant call of Brunel Sunery's navigator, Stuart Gurney, who directed the boat on a rumbline course towards Cape Hatteras while the fleet went in search of a meander in the Gulf Stream.

"It was a brave but risky

move," said Paul Cayard, the skipper of EF Language, adding that it was one he considered but did not dare take as he had to cover Gurney's Swedish rival for overall race honours.

Swedish Match and EF Language have enjoyed a close battle since the start of the 870-mile leg in Fort Lauderdale, and have not been more than three miles

apart. Cayard and his crew have hung on doggedly.

The change came after the Gulf Stream, when the seas began to moderate. In the bay and on their last 150 miles, the water was flat, which enabled Cayard to power up the rig.

Remorselessly, he tracked Swedish Match and with 100 miles to go EF Language went by, although Swedish Match dramati-

cally got back in front and led by 0.2 miles with around three hours to go.

Silk Cut, 0.8 miles further back, and Innovativ Kvarner were 100 yards apart for most of the time, with the advantage to the British boat. They were 18 miles behind Cayard and Krantz but pine ahead of the next four boats: Chesapeake Race, Tostiba, Merit Cup and EF Education.

Racing

Leisure group buy Folkestone for £3.25m

Graham Rock

AT a time when rationalisation is being proposed as the answer to the financial problems of racing, and the subsidies awarded to smaller racecourses are under scrutiny, Arena Leisure, who own Lingfield Park, have bought Folkestone for £3.25 million.

The company has managed the Kent course for the last four years, and intends to raise its profile by increasing prizemoney in the expectation of attracting better horses. A new access road from the A20 will be open soon, and this season a straight seven-furlong course has been used for the first time.

Arena Leisure wants to expand further, and hopes to build a floodlit racecourse to the east of London. "We have been actively looking at sites apart from most of the time, but by the autumn of the Millennium," said Graham Parr, an Arena executive.

If Folkestone's star is in the ascendant, Epsom is making progress in restoring the popularity of the Vodafone Derby.

testing and he got there a little early, but he won, and he's going to stay well," said Hills, who will run Prolix in the Dee Stakes at Chester and Alboon in the Dante Stakes at York before deciding if he has a legitimate Derby contender.

Acting British Horseracing Board chairman Sir Thomas Pilkington, who has been in temporary charge of the HBB since Lord Wakeham's sudden resignation in January, has strongly criticised recent speculation by prominent members of the racing industry and the Press regarding the identity of his likely successor.

Much has been made in the media of the groundswell of support for Racehorse Owners' Association chairman Peter Savill, who has got the backing of a number of important trainers, owners and breeders, while there has also been much discussion about how HBB directors will vote when they make their decision on May 12.

"There has been considerable unhelpful comment and speculation surrounding candidates for the position of HBB chairman," said Pilkington. "Speculation on the voting intentions of Board members is premature and discourteous to both Board members and candidates."

Sandown doubt

THE Sandown Whitbread two-day fixture remains under threat from the weather and tomorrow's meeting there is subject to an inspection this morning.

Heavy rain has made the five-furlong course "just about unraceable" and the meeting could go ahead without any races over the minimum trip.

Perth (N.H.)

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.20 Secret Bay	Secret Bay
2.50 Supreme Charm	Supreme Charm (nap)
2.50 Whalingtree Willie	Whalingtree Willie
3.50 Anabramch	Thibbrook
4.00 Sparkling Spring	Ameslaval
4.50 Sparkling Spring	Sparkling Spring

Right handed circuit of 10m with 200yds run-in.
Games: Chess; Good. Hards: Good; Good to Firm to please. * Deafest thinkers.
e Top 100 rating.
e Top 100 rating.
e Top 100 rating.
Somerset, 425 miles.
Seven day winners: 2.20 Secret Bay; 2.50 NR Smard; 3.50 Thibbrook.
Landed first River 2.20 English; 2.50 Dutch; 4.00 Agent; 4.50 Home.
Fishes in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing, F.F.I.L.

Rusdski gets bounced by Becker, page 15
Stam gets set for United, page 14

Rugby League bawls out brawlers, page 15
Brunel Sunergy steams ahead, page 15

SportsGuardian

Strikers shine in World Cup dress rehearsal

International: England 3 Portugal 0

Sharp Shearer keeps the faith

David Lacey at Wembley

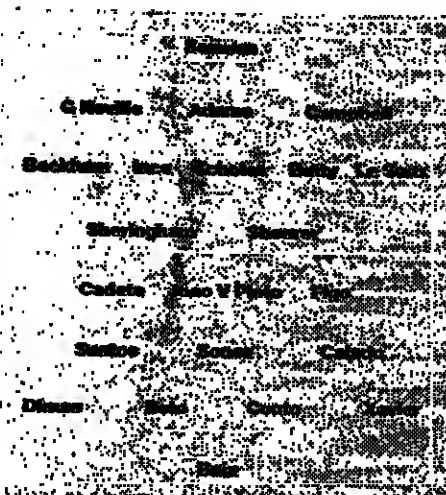
THE seasoned scoring partnership of Alan Shearer and Teddy Sheringham saved England from themselves here last night. Portugal's passing and movement rattled Glenn Hoddle's defence and midfield, but the superiority of England's finishing proved decisive.

A header from Shearer gave England an early lead which Sheringham increased at the start of the second half. Then as the Portuguese defence lost its shape and discipline Shearer scored a third in the 65th minute, collecting a square flick from David Batty and calmly driving the ball into the net from 20 yards.

Faith may move mountains but goals win World Cups and last night England needed not so much a beater as a heart-warmer in this, the first of their dress rehearsals for France. A pity that one of the central characters, Paul Gascoigne, was again missing from the cast list. As expected, Glenn Hoddle was not prepared to risk Gascoigne's injured ankle and his absence brought back Paul Scholes.

Despite the enforced change last night's team bore a strong resemblance to the England side that will start the World Cup against Tunisia in Marseille on June 15. Hoddle had eight of those who held Italy in Rome six months earlier to ensure qualification, and Shearer was starting his first match at Wembley for a year.

Shearer being Shearer, he wasted little time reminding Wembley of what it had been missing. From the start



Twice more before half-time England's more direct approach might have brought them goals. David Beckham, making a well-timed late run through the middle to take a chance set up by Shearer and Sheringham, saw Baia tip his rising shot over the bar. Paul Ince, found in space near goal by Beckham and Sheringham, scuffed his shot.

Hoddle's defence and midfield, however, continued to look ragged and hesitant, giving the ball away, looking unsure of their positions and being stretched by the fluency and imagination of Portugal's football. How they did not concede a goal before half-time only the Portuguese strikers knew, as Seaman kept out a low drive from Joao Pinto with one hand.

Had this been the World Cup, moreover, Batty might not have stayed on the pitch after a crude foul from behind just before the half-hour had brought down Joao Pinto. Last night he saw only yellow.

No matter. In the opening minute of the second half England, with Paul Merson on for Beckham, scored again with the simplest of goals. Whether or not Ince intended to find Sheringham through the middle, his pass took a deflection off the referee and the Manchester United striker strode clear of Fernando Couto to draw Baia off his line and slip the ball past him.

Portugal's Capucho, on as a substitute after 69 minutes, was sent off 11 minutes later for using foul and abusive language.

SUBSTITUTIONS: England: Merson (for Beckham, 64), Portugal: Barbeiro (for Ince, 54), Capucho (for Joao Pinto, 69), Nuno Gomes (63, 65).

Graeme Le Saux was turning Portugal's defence on the left and within five minutes he had demonstrated how important his crosses could be in France. Sheringham laid the ball back, Le Saux swung a centre towards the far post and Shearer moved easily in front of Beto to head inside the near post. Encouraging though such a start was, England's lead soon looked vulnerable as Portugal's passing and movement began to unravel Hoddle's midfield muck as Chile had done before winning 2-0 at Wembley in February. An intended clearance by Sol Campbell cannoned back off Jorge Cadete and just missed the left-hand post before a delightful piece of football all but saw the Portuguese draw level in the 10th minute.

With the England defenders caught square, Luis Figo gathered a return pass from Joao Pinto, spotted David Seaman off his line and beat the

Arsenal goalkeeper with an exquisite chip which floated wide. The moment did little for English nerves, both on and off the pitch.

Midway through the first half Batty, unaware of any danger as he moved towards a ball Seaman had played short to Le Saux, was caught in possession by Cadete in his own penalty area. England were fortunate that Figo and Joao Pinto could not exploit the situation after Cadete had crossed from the right.

Yet whatever their shortcomings elsewhere England still looked like scoring when they combined their speed on the break with accuracy in their passes.

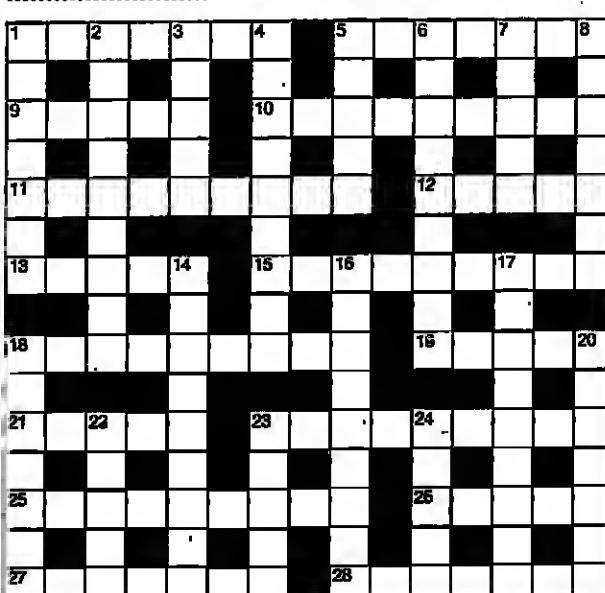
After 25 minutes Scholes produced another of those early, intuitive balls which are his stock-in-trade, finding Shearer in space on the left. Shearer sent Le Saux clear and Vitor Baia had to move quickly to push the Chelsea player's shot round a post.



It's that man again... Alan Shearer wheels away after scoring in the fifth minute last night. PHOTOGRAPH: JULIAN HERBERT

Guardian Crossword No 21,256

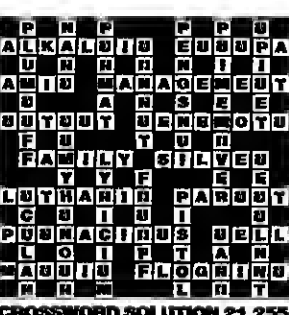
Set by Crispa



28 Urges others perhaps to retain an unknown quantity (7)

Down

- 1 Money-lender holding cash he's misappropriated (7)
- 2 It would be better accepting one's to make do somehow (9)
- 3 A cat, some state in no uncertain terms (5)
- 4 Many seem upset over increase for entrance (9)
- 5 Pulls out ties (5)
- 6 Barrier raised all round: dreadful downpour (9)
- 7 A teller of stories distressing to hear (5)
- 8 Failing to infuriate retired preservationists (7)
- 14 Active Tories and the Left taken in by an agent (9)
- 16 A chart showing the current changes (4,5)
- 17 Place Her Majesty's given a tradesman (5)
- 18 Reliable way to stop bleeding (7)
- 20 Puzzle — one needs nothing more! (7)
- 22 Means to get a musical instrument (5)
- 23 Far from happy about a trainee being served cold food (5)
- 24 "Swamped", a Shaw play (5)



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Malady lingers on

Paul Hayward says the England defence still looks vulnerable to sophisticated passing

WITH England in the stadium and the Spice Girls on stage next door at Wembley Arena, one sage joked that there were two groups performing last night who were at the height of their popularity six months ago. But neither is finished just yet. English youth thronged both shows on a warm spring night that marked the end of the England A-team's hibernation.

Defensive frailties aside there was a hint and purpose in England's demeanour that had been lacking in the dog days of winter. Portugal threaded passes through the English defence far too often for Glenn Hoddle for the goals to be raised just yet. But the wrecking work carried out reassuringly by Alan Shearer and Teddy Sheringham suggested the team can travel to France with about the same level of qualified optimism the calmer heads carried away from Rome last September.

For the first time this year France 98 was really in the nostrils. By midday nine million British phone calls had jammed France's World Cup

ticket hotline. Radio DJ's were working themselves into a froth over the new World Cup song ("it was biked over to our studios specially at 8am" — wow).

The one certainty was that England's performance would be better than the song, which is the musical equivalent of an Athena poster, with some

look distinctly under-priced at 7-1 joint third favourites. Hoddle had been in danger of coming out of his winter laboratory with the mad professor look. The only lesson to be drawn from the two experiments at home to Chile and against Switzerland in Bern was that the underdogs were not capable of ousting the stars. It was apparent that Hoddle can draw on perhaps 13 or 14 players capable of competing with the best in the world and is not blessed

lying melody was the same. With no Gascoigne to anchor in midfield, England produced just enough creativity to suggest they could still prosper without him. Shearer is beginning to fulfill his claim that he would peak just at the right time for England. His goal after four minutes was the product of negligence in the Portugal defence but still required him to take up position hungrily and speedily as a ball from Graeme Le Saux curled across.

It is in defence that England still looked vulnerable to sophisticated passing and movement. Portugal's ability to draw English defenders forward and then thread passes into threatening positions behind them is not unique to them. Both Romania and Colombia possess the same innate talent and Hoddle is likely to spend much of his energy over the next seven weeks working on the tactical prowess of his defenders.

Still, as Kevin Keegan always preached, if the front of the team is hanging in goals as effectively as England did last night defensive solidity becomes less of an issue. The crack of Shearer's right-foot shot for his side's third goal won't exactly be heard across the world. But it blew away the pessimism that had needlessly settled across England.

Shearer is beginning to fulfill his claim that he would peak just at the right time

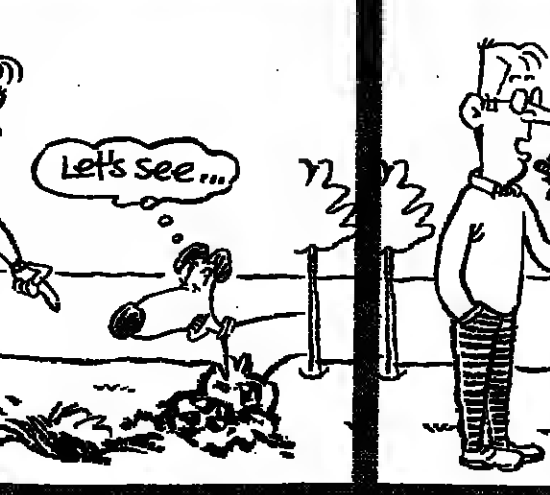
honeyed mantra about being "on top of the world," and that anyone pay-off. "Love you forever England". The fans mostly ignored it, sticking to that rave refrain, "football's coming home". They, like Hoddle, wanted a victory to soothe the nerves.

After a defeat and a draw in their last two matches England were just worried about being on top of the Portugal game, never mind the world. And love doesn't come into it. Not now — with 48 days to go before Brazil and Scotland take the first strokes of a tournament for which England

with an interchangeable bristling force of 22 (then again, who is?).

Nor did the subtle tactical alterations in mid-game yield much success. The feeling had grown that England should return to what they knew best: the personnel and formation that enabled them to win their qualifying group. Last night's team looked and behaved more or less like the side who drew in Rome, though Paul Gascoigne was missing with injury No. 583, and Alan Shearer was back in place of Ian Wright. The song may have changed, but the under-

TimeOut by Cadbury



صوتنا من الامم